



**RISK PROPENSITY AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING INTENTIONS OF  
INDIVIDUALS IN A DOWNSIZED ORGANIZATION**

**THESIS**

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AFIT/GIR/ENV/08-M26

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### **Abstract**

Downsizing can be a traumatic event for any organization. Using Affective Events Theory (AET), this study examined how the emotional reactions of employees to downsizing can impact organizational outcomes. It concludes that the use of downsizing activities decreases organizational commitment while increasing perceived psychological contract violation. Further, it shows that these constructs have a respective positive and negative relationship with knowledge sharing behavior. It also concludes that these relationships hold true for not only individuals most vulnerable to downsizing but also those who the organization would consider immune to such actions. These results suggest that organizational downsizing activities not only negatively impact the emotional state of employees but that such feelings translate into negative organizational outcomes and undesirable employee behavior. More importantly it shows that the negative effect of a downsizing event can impact an entire organization despite attempts to insulate most employees from these effects.

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# RISK PROPENSITY AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING INTENTIONS OF INDIVIDUALS IN A DOWNSIZED ORGANIZATION

## **I. Introduction**

Utilizing the Affective Events Theory (AET), this paper examines the psychological impact of a downsizing event. Comparing eligible and non-eligible employees, the affective reactions associated with an individual's organizational commitment and psychological contract are explored. Furthermore, the results provide a better understanding of the affects a downsizing event has upon a survivor in the areas of risk propensity and knowledge sharing intention.

Current trends in business which include modernization of equipment and process reengineering can cause an organization to downsize the workforce (Budros, 1999). Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) state that a downsizing event can be seen as causing a change in the affective reactions of employees while at work. These affective reactions include individuals' moods, emotions, and general disposition, all of which contribute to their attitudes and behaviors (Barsade, Brief, & Spataro, 2003). AET is defined in terms of an individual's reactions to proximal events and focuses on the sources and outcomes of an individual's affective experiences while at work (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). This can be conceptually compared to Sir Isaac Newton's third law of motion which states for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. While not every event that happens at work will cause an equal and opposite reaction, the reality is, seemingly

benign work events have the potential to cause employee reactions which could be either beneficial or detrimental to the organization. The concern here lies in how the event is interpreted by individuals within the organization.

Reactions of individuals after an event are at the core of AET. The reactions are often emotional and have a direct influence on attitudes such as the individual's organizational commitment and perceived psychological contract. Organizational commitment describes the level at which an individual identifies with the goals and values of an organization and desires to remain in that organization (Robbins & Judge, 2007). Nominally such commitment would aide an employee in daily operations, but a violation of the psychological contract would work in opposition to that commitment leading to feelings of betrayal (Morrison & Robinson, 1997).

A psychological contract is based on the perception that an employee and employer have a reciprocal relationship. The employee feels an obligation to provide contributions ("e.g. hard work, loyalty, sacrifices") to an employer, and in return the employer provides incentives for continued service (Rousseau, 1990). Additionally, there is a perception of job security by the worker as long as the work is completed in a satisfactory manner. A violation of psychological contract occurs when the employee perceives an inequitable return for work performed (Morrison & Robinson, 1997).

There are also behavioral reactions caused by an event that come in the form of risk propensity and knowledge sharing intentions. Risk taking can be defined as a conscious or unconscious behavior in which there is uncertainty about the outcome. The propensity for risk taking is associated with both the individual's personality and situational factors which makes them risk accepting or risk adverse (Trimpop, 1994). Weber (2001)

suggests that decision makers tend to be single focused upon potential losses ignoring potential gains when evaluating decisions long term, leading to increasingly risk adverse individuals.

An individual takes on a certain amount of risk each time they are forced to make a decision. Decision makers in organizations are faced with risky ventures every day. However, at what point does the decision making process stop being a risky venture and become the current standard? The point relies on the sharing of information between individuals within the organization. Knowledge is an essential resource, a utility to gain social and economic status (Drucker, 1993). When viewed in this context knowledge is crucial for individual advancement. The sharing of knowledge involves the two way communication of information and ideas in order to accomplish tasks quicker or more efficiently (Lin H. F., 2007). Therefore, employees sharing knowledge could enable an organization to succeed while withholding that same information could induce organizational failure.

Downsizing can be a traumatic event for any organization. However, most organizations fail to consider the affects that this type of event will have on the entire organization. There is a belief that an insulating effect exists for those individuals that are not directly considered for termination. The impact of surviving an organizational downsizing event hold true for not only individuals most vulnerable to downsizing but also for those who the organization would consider immune to such actions. More importantly the negative effect of a downsizing event can impact the entire organization despite attempts to insulate most employees from these effects.

The objective of this research seeks to further our understanding of the affects of a downsizing event on organizational commitment and perceived psychological contract. The resulting affective state is further explored in the areas of risk propensity and knowledge sharing intentions as mediated by both organizational commitment and perceived psychological contract violation. Figure 1: Predicted Relationships of a Downsizing Event presents the model that guides this effort and the relationships that are expected among the study variables.

This thesis begins with a review of pertinent literature on affective events theory, organizational commitment, psychological contract, risk, and knowledge sharing with the ultimate purpose of this research effort being a better understanding of the affect caused by a downsizing event (Chapter 2). Chapter 3 provides an in depth discussion of the methodology used, to include a detailed description of measures. Chapter 4 describes the results of statistical hypotheses testing. I will conclude with a discussion of conclusions based upon the research.

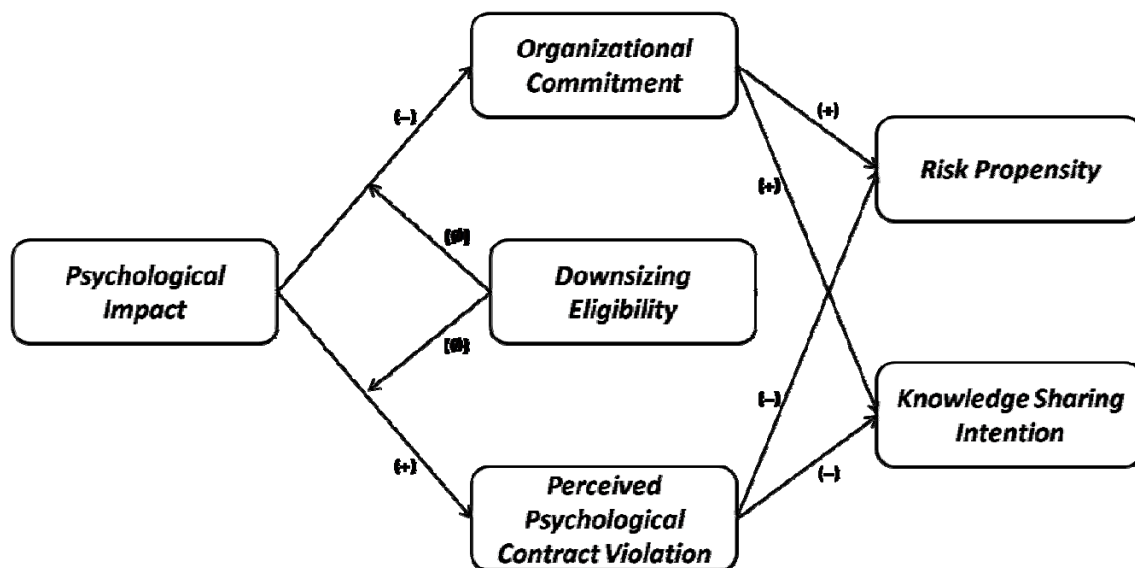


Figure 1: Predicted Relationships of a Downsizing Event

## **II. Literature Review**

### ***Affective Events Theory***

AET strives to provide a means to understand events that drive work behaviors (Cropanzano, Weiss, Hale, & Reb, 2003). The theory implies that employees are impacted by events taking place while at work. These work events are then the causes of affective reactions and the indirect cause of moods and job attitudes of employees (Paterson & Cary, 2002). Affective states caused by a single event can have long lasting consequences dependent upon the intensity of the event (Beal, Weiss, Barros, & MacDermid, 2005).

As previously defined, AET is centered on an individual's reaction to an event, and is focused on the sources and outcomes of that individual's affective experiences while at work (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). AET spotlights the structure of affective experiences, the circumstantial and dispositional source of a reaction, and consequences of an individual's affective reaction to an event. Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) recognize the multidimensional aspect of a reaction and highlight the importance of the impact of an event. The affective state (impact) created by an event may cause attention to be focused on the event or ways to avoid a similar event instead of work related tasks (Beal, Weiss, Barros, & MacDermid, 2005).

The structure of an affective experience is composed of both emotion and mood. Emotions and moods are conceptualized as being affective states that only slightly differ. They are often differentiated by their extent and intensity (Cropanzano, Weiss, Hale, & Reb, 2003). Emotions are intense feelings such as anger, happiness, sadness, hate, joy,

and love that are directed at someone or something and are useful to motivate individuals (Robbins & Judge, 2007). Emotion is the reaction to a specific stimulus, or in this case an event. Moods are less intense and are usually longer in duration than emotions (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). In fact, moods are generally not directly associated with a specific stimulus or event, and at times could be considered dispositional (Cropanzano, Weiss, Hale, & Reb, 2003). An individual's disposition refers to their generally positive or negative outlook on life and is functionally different from an individual's current emotional state.

Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) describe an event as a condition change which causes an emotional response. An event elicits a positive or negative affective response. The intensity of a response is dependent upon the event and its proximity. The initial affective response could be followed by more long term responses to that same event. Recollection or imagination of an event can also affect mood and emotional responses of an individual (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Cropanzano, Weiss, Hale, and Reb (2003) found that affective responses achieve longer duration when an individual engages in reflection of the foundational event. An event deemed to be negative will cause the individual to experience increased levels of anxiety. However, individuals who see the event positively will not experience those same levels of anxiety (Paterson & Cary, 2002). Given that most events cause affective reactions within individuals, a significant event, such as downsizing, will cause both intense short term emotional and less intense long term mood affective responses.

AET utilizes positive and negative affectivity to describe reactions to an event. Positive and negative affectivity are concerned with an individual's general disposition.



Positive affectivity is a trait characterized at the high end by enthusiasm or excitement and at the low end by an absence of those pleasant feelings. This absence does not identify negative affectivity, but is its own construct identified by anxiety and anger. Just like the positive affectivity scale, an individual low in negativity affectivity has an absence of those negative identifiers (Cropanzano, Weiss, Hale, & Reb, 2003). The importance of either positive or negative affective dispositions has the potential to influence all aspects of an individual's life (Brief & Weiss, 2002).

Similar to the extent and intensity of emotion and mood, AET categorizes affective states and traits around hedonic tone and affect intensity. Hedonic tone can be described as being either joyful, gloomy, or somewhere in the middle. It is anchored at the positive end of the scale by happiness and at the negative end by sadness. Affect intensity refers to the degree in which an event causes an individual to experience an emotion. It is characterized by strong feelings on the high end of the spectrum and weak feelings at the low end (Cropanzano, Weiss, Hale, & Reb, 2003).

The affective states and work events, which are sources of an affective reaction, are referred to by Weiss and Cropanzano as the endogenous and exogenous causes of affective responses (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Affective states are characterized by endogenous factors such as disposition, mood cycles, and life circumstances which all have an affective impact (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Work events include exogenous factors which represent a disruption to the established dispositional state and can be either personal or work related. Most of these disruptions will cause emotional reactions both at the time of the disruption and again later with recall of that situation. While this one event can cause both of these emotional reactions, the reactions are not necessarily

the same or equal in intensity (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Paterson and Cary (2002) state that the affective reaction can change over time to either decrease or strengthen in intensity. The emotional reaction can be strengthened through repeated recall or when initiated by direct experience with the event (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). This study focuses on the combination of moods and emotions forming feelings as an emotional state caused by an exogenous work event such as downsizing.

While the obvious participants of a downsizing event are those who were retained and those who were terminated, most studies do not examine all employees who survived the downsizing. These studies tend to focus upon employees directly involved in the downsizing process and do not consider the differential ramifications of those individuals who were employed by the organization but not eligible for the downsizing event. This study focuses on the survivors of a downsizing event to include both the eligible retained employees (eligible survivors) and those employees who were excluded from involvement in the downsizing (non-eligible survivors). There are expected affective reactions among eligible survivors of a downsizing event, but I propose that the non-eligible survivors will also be affected by the event. The impact of witnessing the downsizing event might result in avoidance or action to minimize the possibility of future downsizing events. Studying the psychological impact of surviving a downsizing event and affective reactions of both the eligible and non-eligible survivors will serve to further knowledge in the area of AET and should be useful for practicing managers.

### ***Organizational Commitment***

Individuals who are committed to an organization are more likely to work in concert with established organizational goals (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). The

individual's commitment is a psychological state that connects them to the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Buchanan (1974) viewed commitment as the affective attachment and one's responsibilities to the goals and values of an organization. Organizational commitment is the level of attachment and identification an individual associates with a particular organization and is characterized by a strong belief in the organization's goals, an eagerness to attain those goals, and a desire for sustained involvement within the organization (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). Meyer and Allen (1997) propose that organizational commitment is a result of personal needs and expectations being satisfied. Organizational commitment is more than support shown for an individual's employer; it is a desire to actively participate in the care and nurture of that organization. An individual with high commitment will demonstrate a willingness to give of their time and energy to sustain an organization (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982).

There are three components of organizational commitment according to Meyer and Allen (1997). The components are affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment and can be experienced in varying degrees. Each of the three components of organizational commitment develops independently, but all contribute to the overall commitment to the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Affective commitment refers to individual characteristics, organizational characteristics, and work experiences that produce an emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in, the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) dissect the area of organizational characteristics into the differences between job's characteristics and the organization's structure. Affective

commitment is the desirable features of work. When employees feel supported, needed, and treated fairly the organization makes a positive impact upon the individual's affective commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Continuance commitment refers to the employee's awareness of the losses associated with withdrawal from the organization. The losses or consequences of withdrawal range from loss of time utilized for organization specific training to loss of finances caused by relocation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Employees stay with an organization to avoid these investment losses. Therefore, continuance commitment is the commitment an individual has toward an organization as a result of personal investments and sacrifices made in the name of their organization where withdrawal would be too costly or complicated (Buchanan, 1974).

Normative commitment is an individual's perception that they have an obligation to continue association or employment with an organization based upon their moral compass. This type of commitment lies in the loyalty an individual feels towards an organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Continuing with a feeling of obligation which comes from the internalization of the organization's goals, values, and mission leading the individual to be psychologically attached (Jaros, Jermier, Koehler, & Sincich, 1993). Feelings of indebtedness may also develop from the investment of the organization in the individual (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

The three components that form the construct organizational commitment, affective, continuance, and normative commitments are described by Meyer, Irving, and Allen (1998) as an individual having the desire to work for the organization, need for continued employment, and obligation to stay with the organization. For this study, organizational

commitment is focused upon the individual's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in an organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990), therefore affective commitment will be further analyzed.

As mentioned affective commitment is often comprised of individual characteristics, organizational characteristics, and work experiences that produce an emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in, the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The individual characteristics that influence affective commitment are age, education level, and length of employment just to name a few (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) found that both the age of the individual and their tenure with the organization increased their commitment to the organization. Increased commitment is explained by Meyer and Allen (1997) to be a function of age rather than tenure. They postulate that over time those employees with lower organizational commitment voluntarily exit the organization leaving those with a higher commitment in the longer tenured group. Cohen (1993) found that age provided a stronger correlation to organizational commitment than tenure when tested as an indicator of career stage.

Highly educated individual's commitment to an organization appeared to decrease in favor of commitment to their profession (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). Hrebiniak and Alutto (1972) found individual's seeking to further their education had a decreased level of organizational commitment when compared to individuals with no plans for further education. An organization might find it difficult to sufficiently challenge and reward more educated employees leading them to be less committed (Steers, 1977).

Affective commitment is also influenced by organizational characteristics such as the scope of employment and the amount of conflict and ambiguity associated with the job. Job characteristics have a positive impact on an individual's organizational commitment when the employee is presented clear and challenging assignments. However, ambiguous goals, assignments that place the employee in conflict with goals, or produce highly stressful situations tend to be detrimental to an individual's organizational commitment (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982).

Also pertaining to organizational commitment, the structure of an organization plays a role in the affective commitment of individuals to an organization. Employees working in a decentralized organization, relying heavily upon others work to complete their own work, and working for an organization with formalized rules and procedures showed greater commitment to their organization than individuals who were not experiencing these aspects of work. Neither the size of the organization nor its span of control affected this greater commitment of employees in a decentralized organization (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). Additionally, Fedor, Caldwell, and Herold (2006) found that significant improvements to an individual's work atmosphere initiated increases in individual organizational commitment. For example, when employees were allowed to participate in the decision making processes, the organizational commitment was much stronger (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

The final area that contributes to affective commitment is the individual's work experiences. Work experiences tend to be an important socializing aspect within an organization (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982) and include the organization's dependability in regards to its employees' welfare, fair treatment of employees, and value

of employee contributions (Meyer & Allen, 1997). An individual having positive work experiences tends to form strong psychological attachments to that organization (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982), while negative work experiences may cause the individual to withdraw from the organization (Mowday, Koberg, & McArthur, 1984). Buchanan (1974) found that a majority of the variance associated with commitment lied in work experiences. When employees perceive themselves to be the main element of change within the organization, commitment is negatively affected (Fedor, Caldwell, & Herold, 2006).

Commitment to an organization is developed over time and is an active response to the individual's commitment to the organization's goals and values (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). The higher commitment one feels toward an organization, the less likely they are to leave that organization (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982) and the stronger the individual's attachment to the organization's goals and values (Cook & Wall, 1980) leading to a more stable workforce (Steers, 1977). An individual's commitment to an organization remains relatively stable over the course of routine passing events (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982); however an enduring event like downsizing may cause the attitude to be reevaluated.

As a result of a downsizing event the intensity and duration of affective reactions may be long term thus causing a change in the organizational commitment of survivors. Repeated downsizing events or the direct involvement in a downsizing event serves to increase the affect intensity, thus creating greater affective responses. Consistent with Buchanan (1974) most of the affective change in organizational commitment among survivors will fall within the area of work experience. However, organizational

characteristics are also affected by a downsizing event creating highly stressful situations for survivors either taking on greater work load or facing the possibility of termination themselves. Konovsky and Brockner (1993) found retained eligible survivors had a decreased organizational commitment resulting from a downsizing event. However, non-eligible survivors were not included in Konovsky and Brockner's study: I propose that the psychological impact will negatively affect organizational commitment in both eligible and non-eligible survivors of a downsizing event.

H<sub>1</sub>: The psychological impact caused by a downsizing event will negatively affect the organizational commitment of survivors.

### ***Psychological Contract***

A contract is a voluntary exchange commitment describing expectations of the parties involved (Rousseau, 1995); however some amount of subjectivity is present in all contracts (Rousseau, 1989). A contract involves mutual obligations between the employee and employer for employee contributions to the organization in return for benefits from the employer (Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994). Individuals within an organization often work more efficiently with less supervision when they have a contract. A contract can be written, oral, or expressed intentions which have organizational, social, or psychological meaning (Rousseau, 1995). Regardless of the contract's form, perceptions will differ among those involved (Rousseau, 1989).

The term psychological contract refers to an individual's beliefs concerning the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement with an organization (Rousseau, 1989). A psychological contract develops between an individual and an organization regarding the provisions of an exchange agreement allowing each side to anticipate and



predict fulfillment of obligations resulting in higher productivity (Rousseau, 1995). Obligations can be implicit or explicit promises of current or future inducements based upon the perception of each party (Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994). A psychological contract is comprised of believed responsibilities between two parties (Robinson & Morrison, 2000) and emphasizes the reciprocal environment of the employment relationship (Robinson & Morrison, 1995). Organizations cannot have psychological contracts (Rousseau, 1989); they only provide the context for an individual to form a psychological contract (Dabos & Rousseau, 2004).

It is the individual's perception of obligations that differentiates the psychological contract from an employment contract (Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994). The psychological contract is personal and distinct to each individual's interpretation (Rousseau, 1995). A psychological contract is unilaterally constructed with the belief of reciprocity from the organization for contributions completed (Rousseau, 1989). Interestingly, an individual's perception of owed obligations to their employer decrease over time while the perceived inducements increase (Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994). As the relationship endures there is a development of larger perceived reciprocal organizational obligations (Rousseau, 1989). Relational reciprocity produces worker retention for the organization and career advancement for the employee (Dabos & Rousseau, 2004).

There are two distinct types of psychological contracts, and they are transactional contracts and relational contracts. Transactional contracts are concerned with the equitable exchange of work for compensation over a specific period of time (Rousseau, 1995). The transactional contract features a specified competitive compensation for

work, specified (often brief) length of association, and rigidity in wording such that the association requires almost no emotional investment. There is an absence of long-term commitment inherent in a transactional contract (Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994).

The relational contract focuses on the long-term relationship between the individual and the organization with high levels of interdependence (Rousseau, 1995). There is an open-ended agreement of employment that forms the foundation enabling a relationship (Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994). The organization will make investments into the education and training of employees allowing them to develop company specific skills furthering their opportunities for a long-term career (Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994).

In the simplest sense, violation of a contract is equal to a failure to fulfill the agreed exchange commitment (Rousseau, 1995). Violation of a psychological contract results from an inadequate fulfillment of obligations by the organization (Robinson & Morrison, 2000) in ways the employee expects (Rousseau, 1989). The failure to reciprocate the agreed upon obligations erodes both the relationship and trust of future obligation fulfillment (Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994). Robinson and Rousseau (1994) found that a violation of psychological contract was negatively associated with employee satisfaction, organization trust, and employee intentions to remain with the organization.

A violation can be the result of an inadvertent action, a breach of the contract, or a disruption to the contract; any of which creates an emotional and affective state within the individual and is caused by the belief that the organization has failed to adequately uphold the psychological contract (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). An inadvertent violation results from separate interpretations of a single event in which one party's

actions interfere with the other party's interests even though both were attempting to fulfill their obligations (Rousseau, 1995). A psychological contract violation of this type usually occurs as a result of the incongruence between the individual and organization. This incongruence describes a situation where the individual and the organization hold differing views of the obligations that result in the organization acting in a manner that is not consistent with the individual's expectations (Robinson & Morrison, 2000) falling short of perceived promises (Morrison & Robinson, 1997).

A breach of psychological contract occurs when one side refuses to fulfill the obligations of the contract even though means of fulfillment are available (Rousseau, 1995). Perceived breach relates to an organization's failure to reciprocally meet the obligations of a psychological contract in a way that would match the contributions of the employee (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Breach often occurs as a result of organizational reneging. Reneging is the failure of an organization to meet mutually acknowledged obligations to the employee (Robinson & Morrison, 2000).

When two parties want to fulfill their obligations, but one is unable, this describes a disruption violation (Rousseau, 1995). A disruption violation can also be a result of organizational reneging, but instead of the unwilling fulfillment of obligations, it is the inability of the organization to fulfill the expectations of the employee (Robinson & Morrison, 2000).

Rousseau (1995) states that the modern organization has a myriad of contract types each consisting of transactional and relational features which are continually violated. Additionally, findings suggest that a violation of either transactional or relational contracts produces a strong negative impact upon the employees (Robinson & Rousseau,

1994). It is the individual's interpretation of both the contract and the violation that is at the core of psychological contract violation. When a violation occurs in this atmosphere, it is the employee's perception of psychological contract type that determines the specific type of violation. Regardless of the type of psychological contract being violated, the resulting impact is negative as perceived by the individual (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994).

Specific to this research, the affective reactions caused by a downsizing event may result in feelings of violation associated with a survivor's psychological contract. These feelings of violation would stem from the possibility of downsizing selection coupled with the eligible survivor's expectation of long term employment given that reciprocity existed with the organization. Non-eligible survivors may also perceive a violation of psychological contract if the expectation of long term employment existed, thus creating a fear of future downsizing events. The affectively intense feelings of surviving a downsizing event would increase the perception of psychological contract violation.

H<sub>2</sub>: The psychological impact caused by a downsizing event will positively affect the perceived psychological contract of survivors.

Often a perceived violation of psychological contract leads the individual to have feelings of betrayal, dissatisfaction, frustration, and even disappointment (Rousseau, 1989). When a violation of psychological contract occurs, the individual has a myriad of possible responses which fall within the dimensions of active-passive and constructive-destructive. These two dimensions form the four categories of exit, voice, loyalty/silence, and neglect/destruction (Rousseau, 1995). Exit represents an individual's voluntary termination of the organizational relationship. Employees sever employment for failure to uphold contractual inducements. This is the most likely response for a

violation of a transaction contract employee (Rousseau, 1995). An individual attempting to reduce losses and restore trust after a violation is responding with voice. A voice response makes an effort to remedy the violation through written, verbal, or monetary means (Rousseau, 1995). An individual's non-response to a psychological contract violation represents the category of silence/loyalty. The individual's endurance of the violation suggests an acceptance of the situation where the individual waits for circumstances to get better or believes there are no other alternatives (Rousseau, 1995). Neglect represents a passive negligence response to a violation and causes an erosion of the individual's organization relationship. Neglect can be in the form of ignoring duties to failure to invest time, energy, or knowledge in coworkers. The other side of this response is destructive behaviors to include theft, aggression, and vandalism (Rousseau, 1995).

An individual who perceives a violation of their psychological contract may have negative affective reactions. Survivors of a downsizing event who perceive themselves as having had a more transactional psychological contract violation, might exhibit exit or silence/loyalty as their course of action. While exit is a possible reaction to the violation, at times the situation or contractual obligations do not allow the employee to exit. In this case silence/loyalty becomes the response while waiting for the contractual obligations to expire. Individuals with a more relational psychological contract violation may react with silence/loyalty, or neglect. In a large organization an individual may believe that their lone voice of opposition to the offending act would go unnoticed, leading to a silence/loyalty response. Within that same feeling of being unnoticed, the individual

might exhibit neglect in the areas of duties preformed or sharing of knowledge with others.

An individual's organizational commitment and perceived violation of psychological contract may result in affective reactions generated in the areas of risk preference and knowledge sharing intentions. Negative affective reactions may result in a negative change to the risk preference and knowledge sharing intentions of individuals surviving a downsizing event. The overall impact of the event may lead to a degradation of the organization.

### ***Risk Propensity***

Individual risk propensity and risk taking of organizational members is an ever increasing crucial part of business. The demands placed on individual decision makers grow with the size and complexity of an organization. The larger and more complex the organization the more potential uncertainty there is in a decision (Weber, 2001). While many innovations have been the result of risk taking, many individuals are incapacitated by the fear of a risky failure (Singh, 1986). Decisions have become more risky and less certain (Weber, 2001).

Risk is defined as the uncertainty associated with a decision regardless of the outcome, positive or negative (Weber, 2001). It is the concept of making a choice between numerous possible solutions where the decision maker can anticipate the probability of certain results. As the expected outcome probability increases, the risk associated with the decision decreases (Weber, 2001). Sitkin and Pablo (1992) define risk as a degree of uncertainty in which significant or disappointing decision outcomes might be realized.

There are three key dimensions inherent in the definition of risk: outcome uncertainty, outcome expectation, and outcome potential. Each of these three dimensions contribute to the riskiness and uncertainty associated with a decision (Weber, 2001). Outcome uncertainty is represents a situation where the decision maker lacks knowledge in regards to the potential outcomes of a decision and the various outcome probabilities (Sitkin & Pablo, 1992). Weber (2001) similarly states that not knowing the possible outcome of a decision lowers the outcome probability and increases the risk associated with the decision. In fact, unknown outcomes can lead to uncontrollable results resembling pure chance (Sitkin & Pablo, 1992). Additionally, when faced with multiple alternative risky decisions, the likelihood of the decision maker possessing the needed knowledge concerning all of the possible outcomes is highly unlikely (Weber, 2001). However, the more knowledge an individual possesses about the given situation the less risky the decision (Zhao, Seibert, & Hills, 2005).

The second dimension of risk is outcome expectations which cover the full range of outcomes from negative to positive. The greater the number of all possible situational outcomes (known and unknown) the greater the risk associated with the decision (Weber, 2001). The potential for negative or disappointing outcomes of a situation contribute to the degree of risk associated with a decision, while positive outcome possibilities detract from the degree of risk associated with a decision (Sitkin & Pablo, 1992). Additionally, as the range of possible outcomes increases so does the associated risk of that situation (Weber, 2001).

Outcome potential is the final dimension of risk, and refers to the extent to which a potential consequence of the decision is negative or positive. Sitkin and Pablo (1992)

provide the example of playing the lottery. The possibility of winning the grand prize is extremely low, but the extreme prize amount and relatively low cost of each chance reduces the overall risk associated with playing. The probability distribution of decision outcomes contributes the overall riskiness of a situation. When the outcomes have the same probability of occurring regardless of the decision that is made, the situation is much riskier than having an outcome with a high probability given a distinct decision (Weber, 2001). Within the probability outcomes is the possibility of achieving the most and least favorable outcomes. The goal is to choose a decision that gives the highest probability to achieving the most favorable outcome while avoiding the least favorable. However, as the least favorable outcome becomes more severe, the level of risk associated with the situation increases (Weber, 2001). Decision repetitiveness offsets the least favorable outcome and increases the likelihood of an individual to engage in risky behavior (Sitkin & Pablo, 1992). This is due to a familiarity with the situation, leading the decision maker to choose a course of action based on frequency (Weber, 2001).

Individual risk behavior is characterized by the chosen decision's amount of associated risk as determined by risk dimensions (Sitkin & Pablo, 1992). Risk behavior is affected by both risk perception and risk propensity influencing an individual's decision making behavior in a risky situation.

Risk perception is constructed with a variety of characteristics being both organizational and situational in nature which indirectly influence risk behavior through perception (Sitkin & Pablo, 1992). The individual's perception of the situation contributes to their propensity to engage in risky behavior. Perception may lead the individual to overestimate or underestimate situational risk, reject thoughts of



uncertainty, and display excessive confidence in their own judgment (Sitkin & Pablo, 1992).

Risk propensity can be described as an individual's general tendency to avoid or engage in risk taking behavior (Sitkin & Pablo, 1992). An individual's risk propensity could be represented by a number line ranging from extreme risk aversion on the left to extreme risk seeking on the right. A decision maker with a propensity to avoid risk would choose a conservative decision solution thus matching their risk aversion and minimizing the possible losses (Weber, 2001). The individual who is risk adverse often displays a fear of failure leading to a downward spiral of ever increasingly conservative decisions especially in the face of declining performance (Singh, 1986).

Contrary to the risk averse, an individual with a risk seeking propensity would choose to maximize the possible gains and choose a decision solution that provided the highest level of gains (Weber, 2001). There is an expectation among risk seekers of being able to endure the stresses of an uncertain situation perceiving a sense of control over the situation (Zhao, Seibert, & Hills, 2005). They may also be willing to tolerate the possibility of loss with a lower probability for gain if the potential benefits are large (Sitkin & Pablo, 1992).

In general, risk propensity is the current tendency of the decision maker to assume or avoid risk (Sitkin & Weingart, 1995) and is determined by the individual's risk preference, inertia, and outcome history (Sitkin & Pablo, 1992). Sitkin and Weingart (1995) proposed a trait based definition where the individual propensity to avoid or assume risk is stable but changeable over time. This definition allows for corrective modifications to be made to risk propensity through experience or knowledge.

Risk preference is an individual's tendency to accept or avoid risk and has been explained as being dispositional in nature (Sitkin & Pablo, 1992). Risk preference remains fairly stable over time (Killgore, Vo, Castro, & Hoge, 2006) resulting in decisions with an overall risk level equal to the individual's risk orientation (Weber, 2001). Therefore, a decision made will match the decision maker's risk preference. The decision maker will examine the possible outcomes and decide on the risk level most acceptable to them for the situation being faced. Those individuals who have a higher preference for risk would want to maximize possible gains from a situation and would not be as concerned with the level of risk. Individuals who have a lower preference for risk would choose an outcome that had a low risk level in order to minimize potential loss (Weber, 2001).

Inertia refers to an individual's tendency to handle risky situations in a similar manner forming a relatively stable pattern (Sitkin & Weingart, 1995). Those individuals who have a higher propensity for risk will predictably be more likely to engage in risk taking, just as individuals with a low propensity for risk will continue to avoid risk (Sitkin & Pablo, 1992).

Outcome history takes center stage in the stable but changeable definition of risk propensity. Outcome history is an interaction between the person and situation where previous risk-related decision outcomes impact current and future decisions in similar situations (Sitkin & Weingart, 1995). Sitkin and Weingart (1995) suggest that when an individual has previously experienced successful risk taking, the propensity to engage in risk taking behavior is increased. It is the association of decision outcomes with actions forming a reinforcing of or diminishing affect on risk propensity. Ratner and Herbst

(2005) found that a negative outcome of a decision that had high success probability resulted in the individual avoiding that same decision when faced with a similar situation, even though the probability of success was high. This negative outcome affected a change in the risk propensity of individuals through their outcome history. Monga and Rao (2006) found that risk propensity was affected substantially more by negative prior outcomes than positive.

Outcome history has also been shown to influence an individual's evaluation of another's decision when the outcome was positive (Ratner & Herbst, 2005). Additionally, studies have shown that fear of an observed outcome is linked to individual risk avoidance given a similar situation (Maner & Gerend, 2007). Given that the outcome history of others has been shown to influence and affect an individual's risk propensity, equity theory may apply. Within equity theory, individual outcome to input ratio is evaluated against the ratio of outcome to input of others forming a comparison relationship. From that comparison the individual perceives the equality of the relationship producing a positive or negative inequality. From this inequality, the individual adjusts inputs in order to restore equity (Huseman, Hatfield, & Miles, 1987).

Consistent with equity theory, a survivor may internalize the outcome of those selected for downsizing as their own history thus creating a need to adjust risk propensity in order to avoid being selected for future downsizing events. This situation would be especially true if the survivor experienced positive inequity believing they could have just as easily been dismissed (Brockner, Greenberg, Brockner, Bortz, Davy, & Carter, 1986).

Utilizing AET an individual who experienced a stressful affective event would adjust their risk propensity accordingly to avoid the risk associated with a similar future event as

it relates to safety (Størseth, 2007). Størseth (2007) found that an individual may feel the need to demonstrate their value to an organization by increasing productivity regardless of the physical danger. Consistent with those findings, when an event such as downsizing occurs, the organizational commitment of an individual affects their risk propensity positively allowing them to accept more outcome related risk in attempts to increase productivity and avoid future selection for downsizing. However, a downsizing event interpreted as a violation of psychological contract may result in the avoidance of outcome related risk, possibly reducing potential gains associated with the risky behavior, and reducing productivity while avoiding failure.

H<sub>3</sub>: The organizational commitment of survivors will positively impact risk propensity after a downsizing event.

H<sub>4</sub>: A perceived violation of survivors' psychological contract will negatively impact risk propensity after a downsizing event.

### ***Knowledge Sharing***

The fundamental aspect of generating new ideas and opportunities is utilizing previous knowledge as a starting point to expand and enhance understanding. Knowledge sharing is defined as activities that help others work together through exchanging, improving, and increasing their ability to attain individual and organizational goals (Lin H. F., 2007). The key however is held by those that come before, in their willingness to share knowledge. Individual knowledge sharing is communication between individuals that produces a more thorough understanding of a subject with the prospect of improvement (Lin H. F., 2007).

Knowledge can be categorized into tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is the knowledge gained from information and data found in reference materials. Explicit knowledge is easily codified knowledge that can be transmitted and understood either in written or verbal language (Nonaka, 1994). Explicit knowledge can stand alone, the source is not as important as the knowledge itself (Levin & Cross, 2004).

In opposition to explicit knowledge, tacit knowledge is not easily codified and makes up the majority of knowledge on a given subject (Nonaka, 1994). In addition, tacit knowledge tends to be difficult to explain and learn thus hampering its transfer (Levin & Cross, 2004). It is formed from the cognitive and technical aspects of a given field of study (Nonaka, 1994) and is predominantly stored within individuals (Osterloh & Frey, 2000). Transfer of tacit knowledge requires an individual be willing to share and teach another individual what cannot be found in a book. Tacit knowledge transfer is more about acquiring experience than learning (Eucker, 2007). Regardless of the type of knowledge, individuals tend to hoard the knowledge that they have acquired (Bock, Lee, Zmud, & Kim, 2005). This begs the question, why would anyone share their knowledge?

Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations have been shown to facilitate an individual's willingness to share knowledge. Intrinsic motivation is linked to an individual's interests and core values providing them a sense of satisfaction (Lin H. F., 2007). Individual's gain confidence and feel a sense of empowerment from sharing knowledge when it is intrinsically motivated (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2006). However, there is an expectation of reciprocal knowledge sharing among intrinsically motivated knowledge sharing individuals (Lin H. F., 2007). Tacit knowledge transfer relies heavily upon those who have intrinsic knowledge sharing intentions (Osterloh & Frey, 2000).

Extrinsic motivation factors among knowledge sharing individuals includes, rewards and benefits associated with the desired sharing behavior. Extrinsically motivated individuals participate in knowledge sharing activities comparing the effort required to participate and the rewards achieved from participation. If the benefits equal or exceed the effort, then the individual might be motivated to participate. Explicit knowledge is suited for the extrinsically motivated individual since it can be traded much like a commodity (Osterloh & Frey, 2000). In the end it is a combination of both the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors that influence the knowledge sharing intentions of an individual (Lin H. F., 2007).

Knowledge sharing is accomplished through direct communications or indirectly through knowledge storage and cannot be forced or mandated by an organization (Bock, Lee, Zmud, & Kim, 2005). Research has shown that an individual's knowledge sharing intention is driven by the expectation of reciprocal knowledge sharing allowing both individuals to benefit from the arrangement (Cabrera, Collins, & Salgado, 2006) (Lin C. P., 2007). This however creates a concern that the individual sharing the knowledge may lose their uniqueness within the organization (Bock, Lee, Zmud, & Kim, 2005). It may even create a situation where individuals might accept knowledge with no intent to reciprocate (Cabrera, Collins, & Salgado, 2006). This loss of uniqueness may be a concern among survivors within a downsized organization, thus reducing the likelihood of a survivor to share knowledge.

H<sub>5</sub>: The organizational commitment of survivors will positively impact willingness to share knowledge after a downsizing event.

H<sub>6</sub>: A perceived violation of survivors' psychological contract will negatively impact willingness to share knowledge after a downsizing event.

### ***Moderating Role of Survivor Eligibility***

As previously stated, this study focuses on the survivors of a downsizing event to include both the eligible retained employees (eligible survivors) and those employees who were excluded from involvement in the downsizing (non-eligible survivors). Eligible survivors are those employees who were notified and considered for termination, but were retained based on individual performance, or voluntary separation quotas being met. Non-eligible survivors are those employees who were essentially bystanders and witnesses to the downsizing event. They were never notified nor considered for termination. Organizations consider the non-eligible survivors insulated from the psychological impact caused by the downsizing event. This concept of insulation is also seen in the research literature which focuses on the reactions of eligible survivors following a downsizing event ignoring the non-eligible survivors.

There have been studies describing an eligible survivor's reactions to a downsizing event showing reduced levels of work effort, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Paulsen, et al., 2005), and how victims ultimately have better outcomes than survivors after the downsizing (Devine, Reay, Stainton, & Collins-Nakai, 2003). The non-eligible survivors have traditionally not been studied.

Within a close-knit organization these bystanders will effectively experience emotions, moods, and reactions to the event similar to that of an eligible survivor. A homogeneous organization has a culture of shared beliefs and values that provide members with behavioral rules that distinguish the organization from other organizations

(Robbins & Judge, 2007). Additionally, organization homogeneity is characterized by cultural forms, formal and informal practices, and content themes (Martin, 2002) where insulation of individuals will not exist within the organization. Therefore, the eligibility for downsizing will not affect the survivors' attitudes and behaviors as a result of the event.

H<sub>7</sub>: Within a homogeneous culture, eligibility of a survivor will have no moderating affect upon the relationship between psychological impact and organizational commitment.

H<sub>8</sub>: Within a homogeneous culture, eligibility of a survivor will have no moderating affect upon the relationship between psychological impact and perceived psychological contract violation.

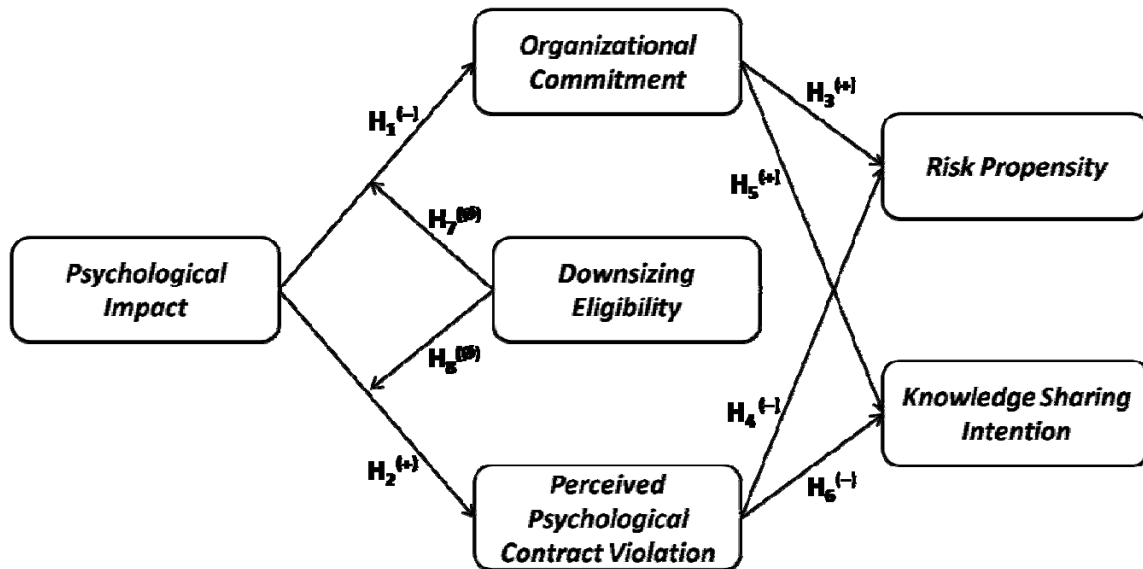


Figure 2: Hypothesized Relationships of a Downsizing Event



### **III. Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to explore the affective reactions and behaviors of survivors following a downsizing event. In order to evaluate the research hypotheses, a survey was used to measure: psychological impact, organizational commitment, perceived psychological contract, risk preference, and knowledge sharing.

#### ***Setting***

Like most any other organization, the United States Air Force (USAF) is in a continuous state of modernization and turnover based in large part on the recent influx of volunteers and a decrease in those exiting the service. This has caused a need to downsize the workforce particularly in the company grade officer ranks who typically have 0 to 10 years of service.

The term the USAF has used to identify this downsizing movement for the officer corps is “Force Shaping”. Force Shaping has two distinct downsizing programs. The first is the Force Shaping Board (FSB). For the 2007 Force Shaping Board (FSB) there were 1776 eligible officers, of which 502 were released from active duty. There were 1274 eligible survivors of this initiative of various ranks and years of service (Air Force Personnel Center, 2007). In addition to the FSB there was also a program named Reduction in Force (RIF) for 2007 (Air Force Personnel Center, 2007).

While the FSB focused on reducing the numbers of junior officers (lieutenants with 2 to 4 years of service) the RIF focused on higher ranking individuals with greater time in service. The individuals eligible for the RIF were the senior company grade officers (captains with 4 to 10 years of service) and junior field grade officers (majors with 10 to

12 years of service). Both programs had the same end result; the eligible officer was selected for retention or separation from the USAF (Air Force Personnel Center, 2007).

### ***Method***

This study utilized an electronic web-based survey to gather data. Although there were other means in which to gather the needed data for this study, consistent with Alreck and Settle (2004) this was the quickest, least expensive, and most accurate means available to attain the required information.

A pseudo post-test only methodology was used in this study. The method is pseudo because selection of treatment and control groups was made by the organization being studied on specific criteria. Additionally, members within each group were aware of their eligibility. This type of field study maximizes the context realism, but minimizes the possibility of control and generalizability to other populations according to McGrath (1981). However, the use of a survey to collect the data minimizes the context, has low precision, but maximizes the generalizability of the study (McGrath, 1981). The combination of field study and survey serve to provide a generalizable study within the context of downsizing but will lack the precision of an experimental setting.

The pseudo post-test only methodology used in this study was made more interpretable by relying on the long term affective component, or mood dimension intrinsic to AET. This was accomplished by presenting the affective reaction scale at the beginning of the survey thus allowing the subject to more easily recall their affective reaction to the downsizing event and making these reactions more salient when completing the remainder of the survey. This provided a more accurate measure of the

strength of the relationship between the affective event and its hypothesized consequences.

### ***Participants***

The current published USAF total force end strength is approximately 329,094 individuals on active duty with 65,722 of those being officers (Air Force Personnel Center, 2007). Utilizing a convenience sample of the officer corps located at the Air Force Institute of Technology, 535 active duty USAF officers were invited to participate in the study. Of the 535 requested study participants, 187 voluntarily completed the web based survey for a response rate of 34.95%. Demographic information was collected from the participants in items 42 through 52 of the survey, and included items such as age, gender, military rank, and race. The average participant was a white male, 26 years of age, holding the military rank of captain with 4 to 10 years of commissioned service. There were 110 eligible and 77 non-eligible survivors totaling 187 respondents for this study.

### ***Procedures***

Data were collected using a 52-item questionnaire and was administered from 25 January 2008 to 5 February 2008 to USAF officers assigned to the Air Force Institute of Technology. The questionnaires were administered via a web-based survey that recorded responses into a secured database. A letter stating the purpose of the survey and providing contact information for the researcher was sent to each participant via e-mail with the link to the survey attached. See Appendix B: Letter sent to Participants. Participation in this study was strictly voluntary with the anonymity of the respondents being maintained at the highest levels.

## ***Measures***

### ***Psychological Impact.***

Psychological Impact will be measured using Probst's (2003) affective reactions scale. This scale measures the extent to which an individual feels certain emotions as a result of an event (Probst, 2003). Respondents were asked to rate, on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *no* to *extreme*, the extent to which they experienced nine emotions as a result of the downsizing event. Three of the items from the instrument were reversed and therefore recoded for interpretation. Responses were scaled where higher scores reflected an individual's more negative affective reaction to the organizational downsizing. Probst (2003) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .82 for the affective reactions scale. The Cronbach's alpha and scale average for this study were .84 (n=176) and 3.06 with a range of 2.59 to 3.92. For this measure refer to Appendix A1: Psychological Impact Scale.

### ***Organizational Commitment.***

Organizational commitment is the level of attachment and identification an individual associates with a particular organization. It is characterized by a strong belief in the organization's goals, an eagerness to attain those goals, and a desire for sustained involvement within the organization (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). The construct of organizational commitment was assessed utilizing the 15 item instrument developed by Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979). Answers were based on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Six of the items from the instrument were reversed and therefore recoded for interpretation. Probst (2003) reported Cronbach's alpha for organizational commitment was .82 using Mowday et al's (1979)

Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). Utilizing the same OCQ Allen and Meyer (1990) reported Cronbach's alpha for affective organizational commitment as .83. The Cronbach's alpha and scale average for this study were .88 (n=176) and 3.76 with a range of 2.63 to 4.73. For this measure refer to Appendix A2: Organizational Commitment Scale.

***Perceived Psychological Contract.***

Perceived psychological contract is based on the perception that an employee and employer have a reciprocal relationship (Rousseau, 1990). A violation of that psychological contract occurs when an employee perceives an inequitable return for work performed (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). The initial obligation of the employee is four to six years with no further obligation required. However, at the end of this initial obligation the employment becomes open-ended allowing for long-term employment if desired. This combination of both transactional and relational psychological contracts allows the employee to view the employment as either more compensation for service or investment in relationship. Participant's perception of perceived psychological contract violation was measured utilizing the global measure instrument developed by Robinson and Morrison (2000). The instrument is based on a 5-point Likert-type scale with response options from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Of the 5 items, 3 were reversed and recoded. Robinson and Morrison (2000) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .92. The Cronbach's alpha and scale average for this study were .92 (n=176) and 2.28 with a range of 1.97 to 2.48. For this measure refer to Appendix A3: Perceived Psychological Contract Violation Scale.

### ***Risk Propensity.***

Risk propensity is an individual's conscious or unconscious decision to engage in a behavior in which there is an uncertainty about the outcome (Trimpop, 1994). The 6-item instrument developed by Zhao, Seibert, and Hills (2005) was utilized to assess each individual's propensity for risk. For this study, respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement with risk propensity statements on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Two items of the six was reversed and recoded. Zhao, et al (2005) reported Cronbach's alpha of .68, and .71 on the validation study. The Cronbach's alpha and scale average for this study were .67 (n=176) and 2.93 with a range of 2.24 to 3.47. For this measure refer to Appendix A4: Risk Propensity Scale.

### ***Knowledge Sharing Intention.***

Knowledge sharing intention is defined as activities that help others work together through exchanging, improving, and increasing their ability to attain individual and organizational goals (Lin H. F., 2007). The knowledge sharing intentions of participants were assessed utilizing the five item instrument developed by Bock, Lee, Zmud, and Kim (2005). Answers were based on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Bock, et al (2005) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .92. The Cronbach's alpha and scale average for this study were .83 (n=176) and 3.89 with a range of 3.45 to 4.22. For this measure refer to Appendix A5: Knowledge Sharing Intentions Scale.

### ***Power***

Power is defined as a test's ability to detect an effect given a particular sample size

(Field, 2005). The effect size is the objective and standardized strength of the relationship between two variables and provides an importance measure of the effect. Cohen (1987) (1992) suggests using a power equal to .8 or having an 80% opportunity of detecting an effect. In order to determine the needed sample size, calculation of statistical power is conducted utilizing G\*Power software. Given that the standard for psychological research is based upon  $\alpha=.05$ , effect size equal to .3, and power of .8, a prior calculation suggests a sample size of 64 respondents for a one-tailed test of correlation and 36 respondents for a 2 predictor test of multiple regression.

### ***Analysis***

Data was automatically entered into an electronic database when respondents completed the web-based survey. Data analyses were conducted utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 15.0. Factor analysis and reliability tests were performed for each of the scales. Pearson correlations were computed to determine degrees of association between the scales. Utilizing multiple regressions, independent variables were examined in order to explain a proportion of the variance in the dependent variable.

## **IV. Results**

The purpose of this research project was to determine if the psychological impact of a downsizing event affects a decrease in organizational commitment and an increase in perceptions of psychological contract violation. The study further examines the affect of the resulting organizational commitment and perceived psychological contract violation upon an individual's risk propensity and knowledge sharing intention respectively. This chapter presents a summary of the results from this research project including analysis of data and how missing data was managed.

### ***Survey and Missing Items***

A web-based survey (Appendix C: Screenshots of Web-based Survey) was administered to a sample of 535 USAF officers assigned to the Air Force Institute of Technology. Respondent participation was strictly voluntary, and respondent anonymity was maintained. Of the 187 surveys submitted, 176 were completely filled out and used in the analysis. This listwise deletion represented a complete case analysis of the data. A post hoc analysis of power utilizing G\*Power stated that with 176 respondents, the power for the one-tailed test of correlation was .99 and 1.00 for a 2 predictor test of multiple regression.

### ***Correlation***

Correlation analysis was conducted on all variables to measure the linear relationship between variables (Field, 2005). Table 1: Means, Reliabilities, and Correlational Data contains the means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and correlations for the variables:



psychological impact, organizational commitment, perceived psychological contract violation, risk propensity, and knowledge sharing.

**Table 1: Means, Reliabilities, and Correlational Data**

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Psychological Impact	3.06	.80	.84									
2. Organizational Commitment	3.76	.61	-.25**	.88								
3. PPCV	2.28	.95	.25**	-.44**	.92							
4. Risk Propensity	2.93	.62	-.17*	.01	.07	.67						
5. Knowledge Sharing	3.89	.61	-.09	.40**	-.30**	.02	.83					
6. Force Shaping Eligibility	.60	.49	.20**	-.04	.06	-.03	.04	1				
7. Education	4.54	.67	.00	-.83	.02	.05	-.06	-.41**	1			
8. Rank	5.28	1.51	-.02	-.09	.13	.06	-.10	-.57**	.54**	1		
9. Age	31.65	5.34	.01	.00	.05	.03	-.13	-.55**	.54**	.79**	1	
10. Psychological Impact X Force Shaping Eligibility	1.94	1.69	.47**	-.09	.13	-.09	.01	.93**	-.35**	-.51**	-.47**	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Perceived Psychological Contract Violation (PPCV).

\* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed). Listwise deletion,  $N=176$ . Reliabilities reported on the diagonal.

Analysis of demographic data provided concern in respect to the correlations between Force Shaping eligibility (FSE) and education, rank, and age. The Pearson correlation between FSE and education produced an  $r = -.41$  ( $p < .05$ ,  $n = 176$ ), FSE and rank produced an  $r = -.57$  ( $p < .05$ ,  $n = 176$ ), and FSE and age  $r = -.55$  ( $p < .05$ ,  $n = 176$ ) indicating that the randomization of the subjects may not exist. While education, rank, and age correlated highly with FSE, they did not correlated to any of the other measures in the model significantly thus supporting the fact that randomization was tenable.

### ***Direct Effects***

Through regression, a predictive model is constructed where the dependent variable is predicted from one or more independent variables (Field, 2005). Regression analysis was conducted to measure the degree and direction of influence the independent variable or variables had upon the dependent variable (Alreck & Settle, 2004). In simple regression the dependent variable is predicted from only one independent variable. Multiple

regression utilizes at least two independent variables to predict the dependent variable. Conceptually, regression allows for the use of a straight line to summarize the data set (Field, 2005).

### ***Hypothesis One***

Hypothesis one was concerned with the negative relation between the constructs, psychological impact and organizational commitment. Psychological impact was measured utilizing Probst's (2003) 9-item, 5-point affective reactions scale. Organizational commitment was measured with the 15-item, 5-point OCQ developed by Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979). Hypothesis one and seven were both tested using the same linear regression model. Organizational commitment was entered into the regression model as the dependent variable, with psychological impact entered as the independent variable. This model shows that psychological impact explained a significant proportion of variance in organizational commitment  $R^2 = .06$ ,  $F(2, 173) = 5.546$ ,  $p < .05$ . As shown in Table 2: Regression Analysis for Organizational Commitment, the direct effect of psychological impact on organizational commitment was highly significant  $\beta = -.24$ ,  $t(173) = -3.21$ ,  $p < .05$ , thus **supporting hypothesis one**.

**Table 2: Regression Analysis for Organizational Commitment**

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$R^2/\Delta R^2$
Step 1				
(Constant)	4.34	.18		.06
Psychological Impact	-.18	.06	-.24**	
Force Shaping Eligibility	-.02	.09	-.02	
Step 2				
(Constant)	4.57	.27		.01
Psychological Impact	-.27	.09	-.35**	
Force Shaping Eligibility	-.43	.36	-.35	
Psychological Impact X Force Shaping Eligibility	.14	.12	.38	

Note: \*\*.  $p < 0.05$ . \*.  $p < 0.10$ .

## ***Hypothesis Two***

Hypothesis two was concerned with the positive relation between the constructs, psychological impact and perceived psychological contract violation. Organizational commitment was measured with the 15-item, 5-point OCQ developed by Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979). Perceived psychological contract violation was measured with the 5-item, 5-point global measure instrument developed by Robinson and Morrison (2000). Hypothesis two and eight were both tested using the same linear regression model. Perceived psychological contract violation was entered into the regression model as the dependent variable, with psychological impact entered as the independent variable. This model shows that psychological impact explained a significant proportion of variance in perceived psychological contract violation  $R^2 = .06$ ,  $F(2, 173) = 5.894$ ,  $p < .05$ . As shown in Table 3: Regression Analysis for Perceived Psychological Contract Violation, the direct effect of psychological impact on organizational commitment was highly significant  $\beta = .25$ ,  $t(173) = 3.29$ ,  $p < .05$ . Therefore, **hypothesis two is supported.**

**Table 3: Regression Analysis for Perceived Psychological Contract Violation**

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$R^2/\Delta R^2$
Step 1				
(Constant)	1.36	.28		.06
Psychological Impact	.29	.09	.25**	
Force Shaping Eligibility	.04	.14	.02	
Step 2				
(Constant)	1.45	.42		.00
Psychological Impact	.26	.14	.22**	
Force Shaping Eligibility	-.11	.57	-.06	
Psychological Impact X Force Shaping Eligibility	.05	.18	.09	

Note. \*\*,  $p < 0.05$ . \*,  $p < 0.10$ .

### ***Hypothesis Three***

Hypothesis three proposed the positive relation between the constructs, organizational commitment and risk propensity. Organizational commitment was measured with the 15-item, 5-point OCQ developed by Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979). The 6-item instrument developed by Zhao, Seibert, and Hills (2005) was utilized to assess each individual's propensity for risk. Hypothesis three and four were both tested using the same linear regression model. Risk propensity was entered into the regression model as the dependent variable, with organizational commitment entered as the independent variable. The model represented by Table 4: Regression Analysis for Risk Propensity fails to explain a significant proportion of the variance associated with risk propensity  $R^2 = .01$ ,  $F(2, 173) = 0.611$ ,  $p > .05$ . The direct effect of organizational commitment on risk propensity was not significant  $\beta = .05$ ,  $t(173) = .63$ ,  $p > .05$ . Therefore, **hypothesis three is not supported.**

**Table 4: Regression Analysis for Risk Propensity**

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$R^2$
Step 1				
(Constant)	2.59	.40		.01
Organizational Commitment	.06	.09	.05	
Perceived Psychological Contract Violation	.06	.06	.09	

Note. \*\*.  $p < 0.05$ . \*.  $p < 0.10$ .

### ***Hypothesis Four***

Hypothesis four was concerned with the negative relation between the constructs, perceived psychological contract violation and risk propensity. Perceived psychological contract violation was measured with the 5-item, 5-point global measure instrument developed by Robinson and Morrison (2000). The 6-item instrument developed by Zhao, Seibert, and Hills (2005) was utilized to assess each individual's propensity for risk. Risk

propensity was entered into the regression model as the dependent variable, with perceived psychological contract violation entered as the independent variable. As shown in Table 4: Regression Analysis for Risk Propensity, the direct effect of perceived psychological contract violation on risk propensity was not significant  $\beta = .09$ ,  $t(173) = 1.09$ ,  $p > .05$ . Therefore, **hypothesis four is not supported**.

### ***Hypothesis Five***

Hypothesis five proposed the positive relation between the constructs, organizational commitment and knowledge sharing intention. Organizational commitment was measured with the 15-item, 5-point OCQ developed by Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979). Knowledge sharing intention was assessed utilizing the 5-item, 5-point Likert-type scale developed by Bock, Lee, Zmud, and Kim (2005). Hypothesis five and six were both tested using the same linear regression model. Knowledge sharing intention was entered into the regression model as the dependent variable, with organizational commitment entered as the independent variable. The model, represented by Table 5: Regression Analysis for Knowledge Sharing Intentions, provides an explanation for a significant proportion of the variance associated with knowledge sharing intention  $R^2 = .18$ ,  $F(2, 173) = 19.070$ ,  $p < .05$ . The direct effect of organizational commitment on knowledge sharing intention was highly significant  $\beta = .34$ ,  $t(173) = 4.42$ ,  $p < .05$ , thus **supporting hypothesis five**.

**Table 5: Regression Analysis for Knowledge Sharing Intentions**

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$R^2$
Step 1				
(Constant)	2.84	.36		
Organizational Commitment	.34	.08	.34**	
Perceived Psychological Contract Violation	-.10	.05	-.15**	.18

Note. \*\*.  $p < 0.05$ . \*.  $p < 0.10$ .

### ***Hypothesis Six***

Hypothesis six proposed a negative relationship between the constructs, perceived psychological contract violation and knowledge sharing intention. Perceived psychological contract violation was measured with the 5-item, 5-point global measure instrument developed by Robinson and Morrison (2000). Knowledge sharing intention was assessed utilizing the 5-item, 5-point Likert-type scale developed by Bock, Lee, Zmud, and Kim (2005). Knowledge sharing intention was entered into the regression model as the dependent variable, with perceived psychological contract violation entered as the independent variable. As shown in Table 5: Regression Analysis for Knowledge Sharing Intentions, the direct effect of perceived psychological contract violation on knowledge sharing intention was significant  $\beta = -.15$ ,  $t(173) = -1.93$ ,  $p < .05$ . Therefore, **hypothesis six is supported.**

### ***Moderation Effects***

As mentioned previously, multiple regression utilizes at least two independent variables in the predictive model. Additionally, a moderating variable is typically defined as adjusting the causal connection between independent and dependent variables (Dooley, 1995) and is entered into the regression model as an independent variable.

Moderation is checked by creating an interaction term which is derived from multiplying the moderating and independent variables together (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). This interaction term is then entered into the regression model as an independent variable. In describing multiple regression results, the direct effects or independent variables along with the interaction between the main effect and the moderating effect are considered (Aguinis & Stone-Romero, 1997).

Interpretation of the interaction term yields a determination of moderation (Aguinis & Stone-Romero, 1997). If the interaction effect is significant, then there is moderation of the relationship. Similarly, a lack of significance support hypotheses which propose that a relationship does not exist (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003).

### ***Hypothesis Seven***

Regarding the hypotheses that test for interactions, hypothesis seven proposes that the relationship between psychological impact and organizational commitment is not influenced by eligibility for downsizing. This hypothesis was tested using moderated regression in the same model as hypothesis one. First, the dichotomous variable eligibility was coded as “1” for eligible survivors and as “0” for non-eligible survivors of the downsizing. Psychological impact and eligibility were entered into a regression equation as independent variables with organizational commitment as the dependent variable. Step two of the moderated regression included entering the interaction term which was the product of psychological impact and eligibility along with the original direct effect terms. The moderation was tested by examining the significance of this interaction term. As shown in Table 2: Regression Analysis for Organizational Commitment, the interaction was not significant,  $\beta = .377$ ,  $t(173) = 1.159$ ,  $p = .248$ . Therefore, **hypothesis seven is supported** indicating there is no moderating effect by eligibility.

### ***Hypothesis Eight***

Hypothesis eight again tests the interaction effect of eligibility between the relationship of psychological impact and perceived psychological contract violation. This hypothesis was also tested using moderated regression in the same model as

hypothesis two. Psychological impact and eligibility were entered into a regression equation as independent variables with perceived psychological contract violation as the dependent variable. Step two of the moderated regression included entering the interaction term which was the product of psychological impact and eligibility along with the original direct effect terms. The moderation was tested by examining the significance of this interaction term. As shown in Table 3: Regression Analysis for Perceived Psychological Contract Violation, the interaction was not significant,  $\beta = .094$ ,  $t(173) = 0.287$ ,  $p = .774$ . Therefore, **hypothesis eight is supported** indicating there is no moderation provided by eligibility.

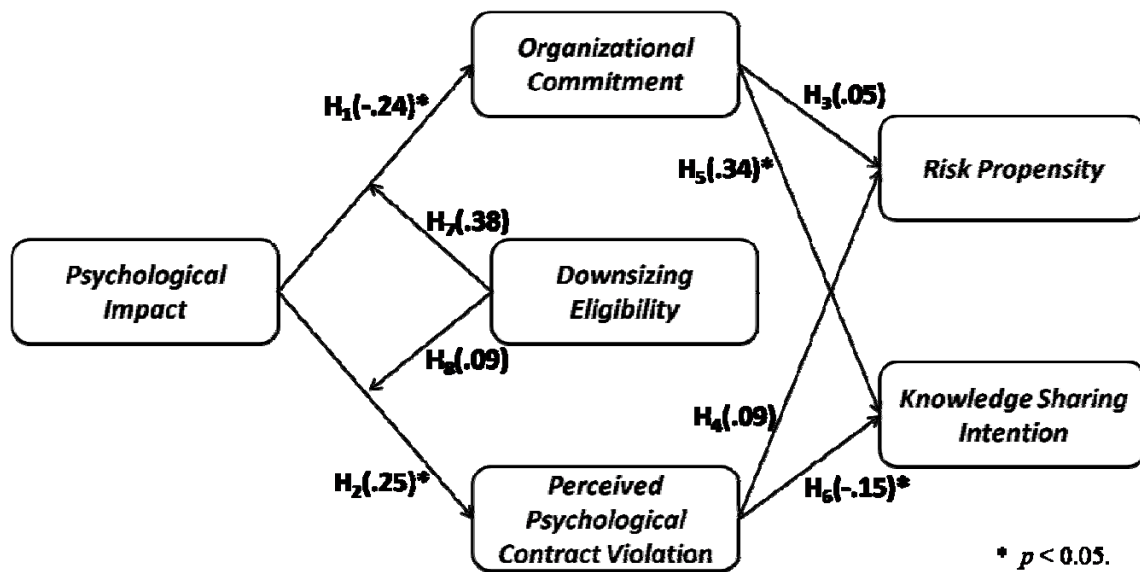


Figure 3:  $\beta$  Associated with Hypothesized Model



## **V. Discussion**

This chapter concludes this study by discussing the results discovered with this investigation. The chapter begins with a review of results associated with the hypotheses. The limitations of the study that may have influenced or limited the quality of the findings are then discussed along with the associated suggestions to improve or further this study. Finally, the overall conclusion of the study is presented.

### ***Review of Results***

The present study attempted to examine the relationship between psychological impact and two attitudinal constructs: organizational commitment and perceived psychological contract violation. These relationships were further investigated to determine if eligibility for downsizing moderated these relationships. Additionally, the behavioral outcomes of risk propensity and knowledge sharing intentions were considered as related to both organizational commitment and perceived psychological contract violation.

Hypotheses one and seven together proposed that the psychological impact of a downsizing event would negatively affect the organizational commitment of survivors regardless of their eligibility. Through regression, the direct effect of psychological impact on organizational commitment was shown to be highly significant supporting hypothesis one. The interaction effect of eligibility moderating the psychological impact-organizational commitment relationship was not significant supporting hypothesis seven stating there would be no moderation.

Analogous to hypotheses one and seven, hypotheses two and eight combined to propose the psychological impact caused by a downsizing event would positively affect the perceived psychological contract violation of both eligible and non-eligible survivors.

The direct effect of psychological impact on perceived psychological contract violation was shown to be highly significant through regression analysis. This significance provided support for hypothesis two. The interaction of eligibility with the relationship between psychological impact and perceived psychological contract violation was not significant supporting hypothesis eight.

Having support for both hypotheses seven and eight indicates that the insulation an organization hopes to provide to those non-eligible survivors does not exist within an organization with a homogeneous culture. This research supports the concept that the negative affective reactions that occur in eligible survivors as a result of downsizing need to be anticipated as global affects to the entire organization. This result becomes an even greater concern when the results of Devine, Reay, Stainton, and Collins-Nakai (2003) are reviewed which reported that survivors of a downsizing felt lower levels of job control, job satisfaction, and quality of life when compared to victims. Additionally, the survivors reported higher levels of stress associated with their job and an overall lower level of health (Devine, Reay, Stainton, & Collins-Nakai, 2003).

Risk propensity is associated with an individual's conscious or unconscious decision to engage in a behavior in which there is an uncertainty about the outcome (Trimpop, 1994). Organizational commitment and perceived psychological contract violation were proposed as predictors of risk propensity in the model. Hypothesis three proposed that the organizational commitment of survivors would positively impact risk propensity after a downsizing event. Hypothesis four proposed that a perceived violation of survivors' psychological contract would negatively impact risk propensity after a downsizing event. Following analysis, it was found that neither hypothesis was supported. However, further

regression analysis showed a significant direct effect of psychological impact on risk propensity,  $\beta = -.16$ ,  $t(173) = -2.15$ ,  $p < .05$  without a significant moderating effect caused by eligibility,  $\beta = -.213$ ,  $t(173) = -0.644$ ,  $p = .521$  as seen in Table 6: Regression Analysis for Risk Propensity. This suggests that the basic theory that downsizing has a negative relationship with risk propensity is tenable. It is only the proposed mediators of this relationship which were not found to relate as proposed.

**Table 6: Regression Analysis for Risk Propensity-Revised**

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$R^2/\Delta R^2$
Step 1				
(Constant)	3.34	.19		.03
Psychological Impact	-.13	.06	-.16*	
Force Shaping Eligibility	-.02	.10	-.02	
Step 2				
(Constant)	3.20	.28		.41
Psychological Impact	-.08	.10	-.10	
Force Shaping Eligibility	.21	.38	.17	
Psychological Impact X Force Shaping Eligibility	-.08	.12	-.21	

Note. \*.  $p < 0.05$ .

Knowledge sharing intention was defined as activities that help others work together through exchanging, improving, and increasing their ability to attain individual and organizational goals (Lin H. F., 2007). Organizational commitment and perceived psychological contract violation were proposed as predictors for knowledge sharing intentions. Hypothesis five proposed that the organizational commitment would positively impact the willingness of survivors to share knowledge after a downsizing event. Hypothesis six proposed that a perceived violation of psychological contract would negatively impact the willingness of survivors to share knowledge after a downsizing event. Regression analysis provided support for both hypotheses.

### ***Limitations and Future Studies***

As with any research project there were limitations. The first limiting concern was associated with the research design. While a post-test only design aids in the minimization of threats to internal validity and is preferred when anonymity must be maintained, there are still threats to external validity (Campbell & Stanely, 1963). The interaction between selection and treatment was the main concern for threats to external validity. However, results show that the interaction is minimized by the homogeneity of the organization and the lack of eligibility moderation. Future research should widen the study to include the entire organization, not just a single location. Further, the addition of a study two with randomized selection of respondents from the entire organization would allow future researchers to verify the nullified threat to external validity in the area of selection treatment interaction.

The second limitation was the lack of significant support for risk propensity as a dependent variable for organizational commitment and perceived psychological contract violation. While it was shown that variance in risk propensity can be attributed to a downsizing event's psychological impact, the proposed model did not fit the analysis. As mentioned earlier, this suggests that there is a mediating variable not present in the current model.

One potential mediator is Organizational Justice or the perception of fairness (Brockner, Konovsky, Cooper-Schneider, Folger, Martin, & Bies, 1994) associated with decisions in the workplace (Robbins & Judge, 2007). If downsizing decisions are perceived as being unfair, an individual may adjust their decision strategy to avoid risk. This would be done in order to mitigate the possibility of negative decision outcomes in

an attempt to avoid future downsizing events. Future studies might consider organizational justice as a potential mediator between psychological impact and risk propensity.

Another area for follow-on research would be in the qualitative analysis of the 63 additional comments provided by the respondents. Qualitative analysis of these comments (Appendix D: Comments Provided by Respondents) may provide further insight into the feelings of survivors associated with this downsizing event. A preliminary review of the comments provided several areas for study.

Many of the respondents expressed a negative feeling of trust toward the USAF as a result of the Force Shaping. A decrease in organizational trust has been shown to negatively affect organizational commitment following a downsizing event leading to voluntary turnover of survivors (Spreitzer & Mishra, 2002).

Job insecurity was also a concern of the respondents. After three years straight of downsizing in the Air Force, respondents commented that it was just a matter of time before they would be considered for termination. Job insecurity has been negatively correlated to effectiveness, ability to adapt, and esprit de corps (Reisel, Chia, & Maloles, 2005).

### ***Conclusion***

The fundamental concern of this study was to determine if organizational insulation of non-eligible survivors existed. Most studies which have examined downsizing have done so using only those individuals who were eligible for the downsizing event. However, in an organization with a homogeneous culture the insulation of survivors does not exist. A downsizing event impacts survivors regardless

of eligibility. No longer can organizations conduct a downsizing event with the expectation that non-eligible survivors will remain unaffected based upon the insulation of not being considered for termination. As a result, it is imperative that organizations make a serious effort to examine how such events impact all survivors.

## Appendix

### A: Scales

#### Appendix A1: Psychological Impact Scale

	No Anger	1	2	3	4	5	Extreme Anger
	No Alarm	1	2	3	4	5	Extreme Alarm
	No Anxiety	1	2	3	4	5	Extreme Anxiety
R	No Optimism	1	2	3	4	5	Extreme Optimism
R	No Contentment	1	2	3	4	5	Extreme Contentment
	No Sadness	1	2	3	4	5	Extreme Sadness
	No Disappointment	1	2	3	4	5	Extreme Disappointment
	No Surprise	1	2	3	4	5	Extreme Surprise
R	No Happiness	1	2	3	4	5	Extreme Happiness

R=Reversed scored items.

#### Appendix A2: Organizational Commitment Scale

	I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that which is normally expected in order to help the Air Force be successful.
	I talk up the Air Force to my friends as a great organization to work for.
R	I feel very <b>little</b> loyalty to toward the Air Force.
	I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for the Air Force.
	I find that my values and the Air Force's values are very similar.
	I am proud to tell others that I am part of the Air Force.
R	I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar.
	The Air Force really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.
R	It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave the Air Force.
	I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.
R	There is <b>not</b> too much to be gained by sticking with the Air Force indefinitely.
R	Often, I find it difficult to agree with the Air Force's policies on important matters relating to its employees.
	I really care about the fate of the Air Force.
	For me, this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.
R	My decision to work for the Air Force was definitely a mistake on my part.

R=Reversed scored items.

**Appendix A3: Perceived Psychological Contract Violation Scale**

R	Almost all the promises made by my employer during recruitment have been kept so far.
R	I feel that my employer has come through in fulfilling the promises made to me when I was hired.
R	So far my employer has done an excellent job of fulfilling its promises to me.
	I have not received everything promised to me in exchange for my contributions.
	My employer has broken many of its promises to me even though I've upheld my side of the deal.

R=Reversed scored items.

**Appendix A4: Risk Propensity Scale**

	The opportunity to pursue an idea I believe in is more important to me than job security.
	I enjoy the excitement of uncertainty and risk at work.
R	I prefer things to be planned thoroughly at work.
	I am willing to take significant risk if the possible rewards are high enough at work.
R	I'd rather miss a good opportunity than make a costly mistake at work.
	If I believe in my idea, I pursue it no matter what other people think or say at work.

R=Reversed scored items.

**Appendix A5: Knowledge Sharing Intentions Scale**

	I will share my work reports and official documents with members of my organization more frequently in the future.
	I will always provide my manuals, methodologies and models for members of my organization.
	I intend to share my experience or know-how from work with other organizational members more frequently in the future.
	I will always provide my, "know-where," or, "know-whom," at the request of other organizational members.
	I will try to share my expertise from my education or training with other organizational members in a more effective way.

R=Reversed scored items.



***B: Letter sent to Participants***

To all,

My name is Ward Willis, and I'm currently a student at the Air Force Institute of Technology. I'm examining the psychological impact of the recent Force Shaping and Reduction in Force for the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) and I need your help.

Provided is a link to a short survey to help determine the overall impact of the FS and RIF events to everyone in the Air Force. This survey should take no longer than 10 to 15 minutes to complete. All responses will be kept COMPLETELY confidential. Findings will be reported summarizing trends at the group level only. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me by e-mail or phone. Your participation is greatly appreciated.




<http://is-afit-40:1999/Surveys/wwillisSurvey/>

Link can only be accessed from AFIT or AFIT/VPN.

Thank you in advance.

WARD G. WILLIS, Capt, USAF  
Student, Information Resource Management  
Air Force Institute of Technology, WPAFB  
Cell:(937)750-0359 DSN:255-3636 ext.7404

## C: Screenshots of Web-based Survey



# FORCE SHAPING

### Survey Control Number: USAF SCN 08-010

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#### Privacy Notice

The following information is provided as required by the Privacy Act of 1974:

**Purpose:** To conduct research on the overall impact of the Force Shaping and Reduction in Force events to everyone in the Air Force. This study examines the impact that these events have on an individual's commitment, expectations, risk preference, and knowledge sharing.

**Participation:** We would greatly appreciate your participation in our data collection effort. Your participation is **COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY**. Your decision to not participate or to withdraw from participation will not jeopardize your relationship with the Air Force Institute of Technology, the U.S. Air Force, or the Department of Defense.

**Confidentiality:** We ask for some demographic information in order to interpret results more accurately. **ALL ANSWERS ARE ANONYMOUS**. No one other than the research team will see your completed questionnaire. Findings will be reported at the group level only. Reports summarizing trends in large groups may be published.

---

#### Instructions

- Base your answers on your own thoughts & experiences
- Please make your answers clear and concise when asked to answer in a response or when providing comments
- Be sure to select the correct option button when asked

**Contact information:** If you have any questions or comments about the survey, contact Capt Ward Willis at the number, fax, mailing address, or e-mail address listed below.

Capt Ward Willis  
AFIT/ENV BLDG 641  
2950 Hobson Way  
Wright-Patterson AFB OH 45433-7765  
Email: ward.willis@afit.edu

Advisor: Maj Alex Bareika  
Email: alexander.bareika@afit.edu  
Phone: DSN 785-3636x4553, commercial (937) 255-3636x4553  
Fax: DSN 986-4699; commercial (937) 656-4699

Start Survey



## FORCE SHAPING

### Section I: Affective Reactions

1 Please rate the extent to which you feel the following emotions as a result of the Force Shaping (FS) and/or Reduction in Force (RIF) events.

	1	2	3	4	5	
No Anger	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Extreme Anger
No Alarm	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Extreme Alarm
No Anxiety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Extreme Anxiety
No Optimism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Extreme Optimism
No Contentment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Extreme Contentment
No Sadness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Extreme Sadness
No Disappointment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Extreme Disappointment
No Surprise	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Extreme Surprise
No Happiness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Extreme Happiness

Continue



## FORCE SHAPING

### Section II: Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment describes the level at which an individual identifies with the goals and values of an organization. Given your feelings about FS and RIF, please choose the number that indicates the extent to which you agree with each statement.

Given your feelings about FS and RIF...

2. ...I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that which is normally expected in order to help the Air Force be successful.	Strongly Disagree 1 <input type="radio"/>	Disagree 2 <input type="radio"/>	Neither Agree nor Disagree 3 <input type="radio"/>	Agree 4 <input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree 5 <input type="radio"/>
3. ...I talk up the Air Force to my friends as a great organization to work for.	Strongly Disagree 1 <input type="radio"/>	Disagree 2 <input type="radio"/>	Neither Agree nor Disagree 3 <input type="radio"/>	Agree 4 <input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree 5 <input type="radio"/>
4. ...I feel very <u>little</u> loyalty to toward the Air Force.	Strongly Disagree 1 <input type="radio"/>	Disagree 2 <input type="radio"/>	Neither Agree nor Disagree 3 <input type="radio"/>	Agree 4 <input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree 5 <input type="radio"/>
5. ...I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for the Air Force.	Strongly Disagree 1 <input type="radio"/>	Disagree 2 <input type="radio"/>	Neither Agree nor Disagree 3 <input type="radio"/>	Agree 4 <input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree 5 <input type="radio"/>
6. ...I find that my values and the Air Force's values are very similar.	Strongly Disagree 1 <input type="radio"/>	Disagree 2 <input type="radio"/>	Neither Agree nor Disagree 3 <input type="radio"/>	Agree 4 <input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree 5 <input type="radio"/>

Continue



## FORCE SHAPING

### Section II: Organizational Commitment (continued)

Organizational commitment describes the level at which an individual identifies with the goals and values of an organization. Please choose the number that indicates the extent to which you agree with each statement.

Given your feelings about FS and RIF...

7 ...I am proud to tell others that I am part of the Air Force.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8 ...I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9 ...The Air Force really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10 ...It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave the Air Force

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11 ...I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12 ...There is not too much to be gained by sticking with the Air Force indefinitely.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

[Continue](#)



## FORCE SHAPING

### Section II: Organizational Commitment (continued)

Organizational commitment describes the level at which an individual identifies with the goals and values of an organization. Please choose the number that indicates the extent to which you agree with each statement.

Given your feelings about FS and RIF...

- 13 ...Often, I find it difficult to agree with the Air Force's policies on important matters relating to its employees.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 14 ...I really care about the fate of the Air Force.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 15 ...For me, this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 16 ...My decision to work for the Air Force was definitely a mistake on my part.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 17 ...I plan on working for the Air Force until retirement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 18 ...I rally support for the Air Force's policies even when I disagree with them.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 19 ...I attempt to recruit people for the Air Force.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

[Next Section](#)



## FORCE SHAPING

### Section III: Perceived Psychological Contract

A psychological contract is based on the perception that an employee and employer have a reciprocal relationship. Please mark the number that indicates the extent to which you agree with each statement.

- 20 Almost all the promises made by my employer during recruitment have been kept so far.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 21 I feel that my employer has come through in fulfilling the promises made to me when I was hired.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 22 So far my employer has done an excellent job of fulfilling its promises to me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 23 I have not received everything promised to me in exchange for my contributions.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 24 My employer has broken many of its promises to me even though I've upheld my side of the deal.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 25 I am treated fair by my organization.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 26 I feel equitably rewarded for my efforts at work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Next Section



## FORCE SHAPING

### Section IV: Intention to Share Knowledge

Given your feelings about FS and RIF, we would like to understand how you generally feel about your intentions to share knowledge. Please mark the number that indicates the extent to which you agree with each statement.

Given your feelings about FS and RIF...

27 ...I will share my work reports and official documents with members of my organization more frequently in the future.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

28 ...I will always provide my manuals, methodologies and models for members of my organization.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

29 ...I intend to share my experience or know-how from work with other organizational members more frequently in the future.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

30 ...I will always provide my, "know-where," or, "know-whom," at the request of other organizational members.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

31 ...I will try to share my expertise from my education or training with other organizational members in a more effective way.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

32 ...I only share information with others by necessity.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

33 ...I only share information with co-workers who are not in competition with me for the next rank.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

34 ...I give disinformation when asked to share knowledge at work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Continue



## FORCE SHAPING

### Section V: Risk Propensity

Given your feelings about FS and RIF, we would like to understand how you generally feel about your risk preference at work. Please mark the number that indicates the extent to which you agree with each statement.

Given your feelings about FS and RIF...

35 ...The opportunity to pursue an idea I believe in is more important to me than job security.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

36 ...I enjoy the excitement of uncertainty and risk at work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

37 ...I prefer things to be planned thoroughly at work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

38 ...I am willing to take significant risk if the possible rewards are high enough at work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

39 ...I'd rather miss a good opportunity than make a costly mistake at work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

40 ...If I believe in my idea, I pursue it no matter what other people think or say at work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

41 ...When given a choice between "tried and true" and "new concept" my choice is new concept at work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Next Section



## FORCE SHAPING

### Section VI: Eligibility

This section contains items regarding your personal Force Shaping or Reduction in Force eligibility. These items are very important for statistical purposes. Respond to each item by marking or selecting the appropriate response that best describes you.

42 Were you or have you ever been eligible for Force Shaping or Reduction in Force?

Eligible	Not Eligible
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

43 If you were eligible, did your retention package meet the board?

Yes	No	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

44 Were you selected for retention?

Yes	No	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Next Section





## FORCE SHAPING

### Section VII: Demographic Information

This section contains items regarding your personal characteristics. These items are very important for statistical purposes. Respond to each item by marking or selecting the appropriate response that best describes you.

45 What is your age?

46 What is your gender?

Male	Female
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

47 What is your race?

<input type="radio"/> White	<input type="radio"/> Black
<input type="radio"/> Hispanic	<input type="radio"/> Asian
<input type="radio"/> Native American	<input type="radio"/> Other

48 What is your highest completed level of education?

<input type="radio"/> High School	<input type="radio"/> Graduate Degree
<input type="radio"/> Some College	<input type="radio"/> Doctorate
<input type="radio"/> Associates Degree	<input type="radio"/> Post Doctorate
<input type="radio"/> Bachelor Degree	<input type="radio"/> Professional

49 What is your current rank?

<input type="radio"/> O-1	<input type="radio"/> O-1E	<input type="radio"/> O-2	<input type="radio"/> O-2E	<input type="radio"/> O-3	<input type="radio"/> O-3E	<input type="radio"/> O-4	<input type="radio"/> O-5	<input type="radio"/> O-6
---------------------------	----------------------------	---------------------------	----------------------------	---------------------------	----------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------

50 What is your date of rank?

Month	Day	Year
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

51 What is your commissioning date?

Month	Day	Year
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

52 What is your primary AFSC?

53 Please add any additional comments you may have regarding the FS and/or RIF:

Finish Survey



## FORCE SHAPING

**Thank you for completing this survey.**

All information is strictly confidential

Close Survey

***D: Comments Provided by Respondents***

<p>The first page of this survey was very ambiguous. I had different feelings at different times. I answered what I felt most of the time.</p>
<p>I was an exec in my last assignment and prepared eight RRFs, I also prepared a RIF package. I was very unfortunate for people who only had training report in their PIF; the Air Force lost several good people. I was also amazed to see people that went to AFIT and graduated with a MS degree receive voluntary separation pay.</p>
<p>I was not eligible for the RIF or FS, but if I would've been eligible for the VSP, I would've taken the money and left the USAF. I have no ill feelings towards the USAF, but I would've moved on.</p>
<p>In the future, when given the option of a new prospective job and staying in the USAF, "job security" is no longer a PRO weighing on the USAF side.</p>
<p>The FS and RIF of the last three years created a lot of angst and turmoil among personnel. Those eligible and not eligible felt that the Air Force had been disloyal to them even though they had not been disloyal to the Air Force.</p>
<p>There were only 5 people affected by the RIF in my year group and AFSC total in the Air Force. Basically there was not much pressure on my year group and AFSC class.</p>
<p>I think it is an example of not taking care of your people and the short sightedness of the USAF leadership to Force Shape/RIF some good personnel just to find out a year from now that we cut too deep and could have kept 3,000 of the people we cut.</p>
<p>For the Force Shaping, my only confusion about the whole process was why the AF didn't use the promotion process, such as the records review at Capt, to determine the force structure for first-time officers. I suppose that by allowing those force shaped to get promoted, it allowed them to become Capts in the Army, Reserve, or ANG, with no hit on their full military record. But the way the LTs were force-shaped I saw a few good officers get removed over some less qualified, simply because of AFSC. Retraining options would've been more effective in allowing the AF to keep the best. As far as the RIF, I can't say there were too many negatives to it. It appeared to be done in a manner consistent with industry and was quite effective in removing the FGO's that weren't motivated to stay in the AF.</p>
<p>Congress may take the funds from the personnel cuts and not allow the AF to make the desired upgrades. Having AF support personnel fulfill "ILO" missions while simultaneously making support personnel cuts is sending a bad message to them about the concern for adequately doing mission support. After the disappointing last BRAC round mission support will be more strained, more risk, less service.</p>
<p>The Force Shaping Program came as a complete surprise to me. Before the board, I told my troops that if they took care of the AF, the AF would take care of them. I can no longer say that since many highly qualified peers were kicked out of the military, but did nothing wrong.</p>
<p>I think it is hard to answer these questions absolutely because I have conflicting feelings about FS and the RIF. I liked the options I had with the FS separation bonus, because I felt the AF was trying to compensate me to meet their goals. I did not like the RIF boards, because the RIF tried to meet the Air Force at the AF members expense. I</p>

think fewer officers would have been willing to obtain a commission if they knew the possibility of their Air Force career being terminated after 3 years was at such high odds.
FS/RIF has not affected officers in my AFSC, so my feelings given regarding this process have been solely as a bystander. Otherwise, FS/RIF has resulted in the early separation of higher quality enlisted troops in my field who likely would have stayed otherwise but felt prompted to get out to get a higher paying job.
In the FS for which I was eligible, I feel there was not enough opportunity for retraining to other AFSCs. New officers were accessed into the needed AFSCs. My feeling was that more turnover was desired by the leadership in the lower officer ranks. I feel this may be bad for the US Air Force in the long run, if that is to be a more long-standing policy. The most disheartening part of the process was when a friend, serving in the war on terror as a security forces officer, was force-shaped out (non-selected for retention) while on his deployment. That made the process seem to be rushed, with little attention to what the nation needs now, and for the foreseeable future.
I felt betrayed. After giving up things in my life and opportunities I had, it felt like I was being thrown away and not needed. I was told this kind of thing has happened in cycles over and over through the years. You'd think someone would figure out how to plan their manning a little better by now.
Generally, it saddens me to see the AF trading people for technology. I think this is a process which, when completed, will put increased stress on the remaining individuals in the AF. I also believe that the AF will find that it has cut too many people and will, in the next 5 years, attempt to correct the deficit by hiring more people--which in the long run, will probably cost MORE money than it saved.
A lot of hard workers and dedicated Airmen were lost due to the cuts and many highly value people were allowed to voluntarily separate. Hope it proves to be in the best interest for all parties in the future.
I was prior enlisted for 12.5 years. I currently have 22.5 years of service. My year group has been eligible for force shaping, but due to my TAFMSD FS and RIF has not been an issue. I could have retired. My responses to organizational commitment are biased based on that. The AF has provided a great career for me and allowed me numerous opportunities to excel. Good Luck with your survey and your AF career.
All the force shaping spots in my AFSC/year group were volunteers, so the rest of us did not need to face a board, so I never had much cause to worry about it.
I thought doing FS was not the correct solution to the on-going acquisitions/budget issues faced by the AF. I believe the AF will be handing out bonuses to exactly those jobs that faced cuts in the not-to-distant future.
In the usual disconnect between Washington budget execution and the reality of emerging world events, the sad fact is I witnessed the Air Force lose two great role models for myself (ironically both whom were younger in years...) and the arbitrariness of the process seemed rather crass in this regard, although it seemed great effort was made to make it as objective as possible. Unfortunately I think in losing such great talent and devotion in these two and undoubtedly others, the upcoming quadrennial defense review will probably identify the strategic threat of Russia and China as a renewed area of concern. I wonder if in 3-4 years the USAF will be asking

<p>where a huge chunk of the senior captians and junior field grades it all of sudden needs went, in a typical lag fashion.... On the flipside though, the USAF is still a great organization to work for even if compensation lags behind what the industry offers, at the lower grades at least, you still get to work for idealistic, principled reasons and enjoy a challenging duty environment are encouraged to make one. Also looked at objectively compared to the practices of recent years in private industry, one can state we we given effectly 3/4 of year's notice and a lot of help in preparing for a potential "pink slip"; this was a real luxury compared to what Enron or Nuetron Jack handed down, as is all too common in the private industry today (and on a soapbox now...may eventually undercut employee loyalty and lead to a resurgence of union organizing in many lines of work). So I wasn't really angry per se on a personal level, indeed I had some monetarily lucrative offers to jump over, nonetheless I am saddened as the USAF lost some fine personnel that I think will really need their talents in the years ahead as a new cold war emerges frontstage (and will, ironically suppress and abate the current non-conventional terrorist threat to a significant degree as the emerging powers will not be hand wringing over Genevea Conventions or technicalaties of engagement).</p>
<p>I don't see how a majority of these questions have anything to do with Force Shaping. How about more personal stuff? Or squadron impact? Because of last years FS and RIF, our squadron alone had 3 voluntary separations, 2 FS cuts, and 1 RIF cut. In a squadron of 50, this was a big impact. However, I do understand that it is better for the AF as a whole and for our Lt year group. There just weren't enough jobs for the number of Lt's we had.</p>
<p>I was a survivor of the 1992 officer RIF. We were told then that we would never again go through that type of reduction. I feel betrayed, especially after spending a lot of time recruiting, motivating, and developing junior officers, only to have them thrown away to buy a couple more F-22s. This was a significant factor in my decision to withdraw from Air War College (correspondence) and not compete for O-6.</p>
<p>The part that has confused me the most about Force Shaping so far is why there are plans to hold a FS board for officers who were commissioned while a previous FS board was happening. Just looks like piss-poor planning to me.</p>
<p>Although it was not an event that I planned for, and I was not happy that it happened, I understand that the Air Force is a cyclic organization whose needs for people change over time. Job security is something we take for granted in the military, but I also think we need to be ready for the day when we work in the private sector and we could get laid off or terminated at any time.</p>
<p>I personally witness more individuals affected by FS focused more on that than on the mission. It is a distraction and it hinders the mission. Additionally, morale greatly suffers for everyone...there has to be a better way to accomplish the goals and ensure that we are not chasing away good people with great ideas simply because they don't look good on paper.</p>
<p>Though I never felt threatened by the FS/RIF, I did lose trust in the AF as an organization. It seemed as though the AF tried to make the process transparent; however, they did so only in the FS/RIF process and never revealed or, to my knowledge, addressed the true cause(s) that put us into a position to require the FS/RIF. This created a perceived lack of accountability. While I don't think the planning errors</p>

<p>were intentional or merit singling out individuals for punishment, I have no trust that the AF is capable of learning from its experience in this matter and think it is likely to recur. The continuous FS boards seem more like a way to treat a symptom of the problem rather than a way to combat the core problem. I enjoy my service in the AF and largely have had positive experiences throughout my career. However, the FS/RIF has shown me the AF has no loyalty to me or my contributions and is willing, as would be any other corporation, to sever our contract at its convenience. I work hard and do well because that is who I am; I don't work any harder in the AF than I would in any other job. The lack of loyalty and accountability shown by the AF in FS/RIF has seriously injured my commitment to the AF and made my service "just another job." If I am offered a job outside of the AF that presents a better fit for me, I am likely to take it.</p>
<p>I understand the AF need to reduce the manpower costs so recapitalization of the force could be achieved. I don't necessarily agree that this was the best solution or a complete solution. We (the AF) may want to reevaluate programs like warrant officers for pilots, especially as we move toward more and more UAVs. It seems like that kind of a shift could potentially save a lot of money in the future by further reducing the number of commissioned officers and replacing them with the slightly lower paid warrant officers.</p>
<p>Some of these questions didn't make sense to me, while others I felt were directed and biased at obtaining a certain result in the research.</p>
<p>I understand that the AF needs to reduce and I like the idea of force shaping in order to meet that need. My disagreement with the AF in this method was allowing the sharpest people to leave first and Force Shaping some of the brightest out of institutes like AFIT where the AF has invested hundreds of thousands just to let them leave for free. I saw some bright, hard working individuals either leave or get force shaped and this was a bad deal for the AF. This doesn't send a message the the AF is being smart about its future.</p>
<p>I wasn't a big fan of how we all lined up in the AFIT hallways to see how got Forced-Shaped. They should have made the process a bit more discrete so it wasn't so immediately obvious who was affected by FS. Even email would have been a little better than all line up in a hallway.</p>
<p>The inconsistencies of ratings and assigned workloads within AFMC centers made it feel like there was a strong element of chance in our selection for retention. The consistency in supervision by civilian raters in AFRL, Log Centers, Product Centers, and Test Centers, meant that an equally competent Lieutenant could either make an inconsequential contribution reflected in their 2 OPRs that went to the board, or could have 2 stellar OPRs. In my organization (when I met the board), I found a strong correlation between the AFRL/CV stratification and who the LTs were rated by. I can't discount the board's findings as a whole, but I know one good officer that was disadvantaged due to poor supervision and mentorship. So now we are left with fewer engineers, minimal new accessions, an increase in workload, and fewer people to spread the inevitable additional duties around to. Needless to say, FS has had a lasting impact to CGO morale.</p>
<p>I understand FS &amp; RIF are sometimes necessary, but they cause me to be uneasy. I</p>

would like a steady job; constant changes in the workforce make me examine staying in the ir Force.
My FS board was going to be this year, but it was cancelled.
I was confused by the general feeling among FS eligible CGO's that advancement in the AF should be a fundamental right. FS is certainly not good for members, but it seems to be a reality that has been around the AF for many years.
Just hate to CONTINUE doing more with less. That worked 10 years ago when we were fat. But now we're way too lean to continue taking these type of personnel and budget hits. It's getting frustrating and hard to keep troops motivated when you keep asking them to do more. Another small side effect is that as more people are pushed out, the folks that stay behind have to take on a larger % of the additional duties (unit safety rep, unit PT rep, unit CFC/AFAF/etc rep, base NEAT team detail, urinalysis monitor, etc. Pretty soon we won't have time to do our primary mission because we'll be too busy doing the additional duties.
It seems to me that supervisors make or break someone's selection for retention. I saw some really motivated Lt's get booted because of poor OPRs from a bad supervisor while others were retained because their supervisor knew how to work the system to make them sound better on paper. I'm sure it's the same for Major boards, etc. It does not instill 'faith in the system,' but then again it's not like I have an idea to make it better either.
It sucked
I have always been suspicious of the Force Shaping/Reduction in Force policies and the information provided by the personnel center. Particularly the "matrix" listing each year group and AFSC and by how many individuals over(+7) or short(-4) the Air Force says it is. What troubles me is that this information as provided does not indicate what the Air Force's ideal manning levels are nor how many people are currently fulfilling them; just the difference between the two. This makes it very easy to manipulate because there is no way to challenge these numbers or ask why my year group and AFSC suddenly went from -2 to 140 within the span of 8 months time while others went from 87 to -117. They are up to something (protecting certain career fields at the expense of others) and I wish they would have the integrity to publicly admit it. It is nearly impossible for me to trust the senior leadership when they are so obviously with-holding and manipulating the information given to me. On top of all of this, it seems clear that the decision to implement force shaping was not that the Air Force was overmanned but rather just underfunded. In the end, Force Shaping/Reduction in Force will only make matters worse and will not solve the Air Force's current problems.
I understand the strategic needs for FS; however, I've become disillusioned with the AF callous way of managing/treating its people. Even if the 'system' warrants a negative process, there's no excuse for the 'people' who execute the processes to fail in the 'human' arena... Although I believe in & support the AF mission, I could/would not recommend it to someone I personally cared about who had equal/better opportunities.
The AF is forcing out a lot of its knowledge.
I don't honestly believe it's over at all. It's just a matter of time, in another 4-5 years, before they come after us again.

<p>Although not directly involved or affected by Forceshaping, I saw a great deal of talent lost by waiving educational commitments and threatening people with a RIF.</p>
<p>I think it's a particularly raw deal for AFIT students who were handpicked for their respective graduate degree programs, then ultimately kicked to the curb. We as an Air Force told them they were special then they can't survive a Force Shaping Board? That's ridiculous!</p>
<p>I did not feel anxiety towards FS, because I recognize that I can leave the AF and easily find a job that I would enjoy. I know that I have solid job skills. I think that FS is comical because AFPC did a poor job projecting future selection rates.</p>
<p>On the questions regarding the sharing of information: I think the questions are misleading--if I already share all my info as required, then the FS/RIF isn't going to lead me to share it any more.</p>
<p>I understand that FS and RIF efforts were the only way the AF saw to get out of a bad manning situation. However, the implementation targeted certain career fields to extreme levels, while leaving other fields untouched. I've seen many officers that were competent and motivated dismissed from service, and others that are in my opinion completely worthless retained. Were we a civilian company going through downsizing, the first folks cut would be the non-contributors, not necessarily cutting half of the people in the mailroom and one quarter of accounting. I know that I was recruited and given both financial and academic incentives to join the AF as an engineer, only to be facing a ~20% layoff in my year group alone less than 3 years later. The process seems counterproductive to me, but I have neither all the information or a workable suggestion to improve the process.</p>
<p>Productivity in the office dropped significantly, not only due to anxiety of vulnerable members, but also those writing the RRFs for them. It created a very competitive environment when a cooperative one is needed to get the job done effectively.</p>
<p>The main issue I have with the Force Shaping and RIF board is that it proves the incompetence of the AF to predict how many Officers they need. Also, some of the questions on the survey may be skewed because I don't feel loyalty to the Air Force, but have a strong loyalty to the United States of America, and it is difficult to separate those two in the survey.</p>
<p>The most difficult part is that no one really knows what criteria were used in determining who was kept vs. let go. There seemed to be no rhyme or reason as to why some were kept over others.</p>
<p>I think that many of the most highly skilled and brightest people are being lost when reduction in force is initiated. When people leave, their knowledge goes with them. In fact, many of the people that accept the voluntary separation pay before the RIF are very well educated and have proven themselves to the Air Force. Those that leave the service voluntarily are usually very confident in their abilities and some would even like to stay in the Air Force, but the unsure feeling of future RIFs outweighs their loyalty.</p>
<p>I was frustrated when I went through force shaping. I felt like I had committed myself to the Air Force for 4 years, and they had made a commitment to me for 4 years. The Air Force's promise to me could be broken to serve its own interests, but I</p>

<p>don't think the Air Force would be so unforgiving if I broke my commitment. Having said this, I am extremely happy to be in the Air Force and the opportunities I have been given through this career choice.</p>
<p>My package did not meet the board due to the cancellation of the FY08 FSB.</p>
<p>It really sucks that (Name removed to protect annomity) and the others in our class at AFIT got RIFd. They didn't deserve it... and selecting people who made it through the AFIT selection process just doesn't make sense. I know the AF needed the money, but there are plenty of other expenditures the AF/DoD could cut first. There is a whole lot of wasteful spending... Congressional earmarks also come to mind. A lot of the outsourcing of mil jobs to contractors doesn't make sense either. I have not seen or heard of proof showing the contractors are any cheaper or better. Also, a lot of the cuts went to the Comm-Info career field -- at the same time we're standing up Cyber command... When you cut the C&amp;I force, where are all the Cyber people supposed to come from?</p>
<p>Should ask questions about wether I know others who were cut and how I felt about that (nervious and guilty).</p>
<p>Some of the questions asked here really need different context and can not be answered appropriately without a '3' to indicate not indifference, but not-enough information. I did not meet the board as I was ineligible. However, I just watched some very outstanding officers and committed individuals get RIFd from the AF. Given the direction we are taking in Cyber, many of these individuals in the 33S career field were just the right force we should have kept--seams counter-intuitive to me.</p>
<p>"FS" is yet another e.g. of how the AF thumbs its nose at its own core values.</p>
<p>Let's see: We're at war, with continual deployments, unfilled positions approaching 75+% and we're REDUCING folks? And who exactly is going to maintain/fly/etc these new planes that this RIF was supposed to buy (which turns out, it won't anyway!)? If the person(s) making this decision had any knowledge of history/politics, he would have realized that any \$\$'s saved would have gone elsewhere anyway. This is one of the most asinine decisions made! Thanks for being the equivalent of Jimmy Carter for destroying the force!!!</p>
<p>The irresponsibility of the Congress and the President in regards to the Federal budget is staggering. Thrusting the US Military into an unnecessary war in Iraq while continuing to cut and slash our military capabilities is an injustice to the men and women in uniform and frankly undermines the defense posture of our country. The financing debacle is due to ignorance of the Constitution ... if we had declared war Constitutionally our country would have been prepared to finance this war by cutting spending in other areas. I am dissappointed our Flag officers have not dissented more.</p>
<p>I care for the Air Force and am proud of my job. The problem comes when senior leaders continue to talk about "people first" or that the AF is a profession and not a job. I bought into it and then watched some very good officers get kicked out. In many cases, they were seperated because they had applied for and gotten select jobs at high speed organizations which meant they got ranked against other high speed individuals. If they had kept their heads down and stayed where they were, they would have ranked in the top of their peers. But because they tried to excel and wanted to be with others who excel, they ranked in the middle and got cut. The apparent hypocrisy was too</p>



<p>much to ignore. We lost good people doing good work because someone couldn't square a budget away. And all the while, we're replacing the invaluable experience and knowledge of those folks with brand new 2Lt's who have to be trained all over again. The phenomenal waste of it, both in terms of knowledge and dollars, is mind-boggling. No matter how it's sold, the AF did not take care of its people on this one.</p>
<p>My objection with the RIF board is the transition of people for parts as a decision by AF leadership who are more plot focused then Air Power focused. I have no objection for the need for a force to streamline its self, but to do it for platforms at the cost of several good future leaders I personally feel is folly. I agree with the need for new technology, but with AF leadership more concerned about obtaining newer "hot rod" fighters instead of replacing an inventory with UAS technolog then keeping the next Mitchell/Doolittle I am concerned. In addition, a leadership willing to selling its self out to other services during the current ground conflicts in OIF/OEF to maintain "validation" at the budget tables in order to expand it cofers concerns me as well. I have no question in my mind of the patriotism of our AF leadership, but i am ultimately unconvinced that their established practises are in the AF's long term best interest.</p>
<p>I don't think this survey has captured the true issues of the force shaping. We know that drastic cuts are coming. Yet, very select and small groups are actually eligible for voluntary separation. That produces lots of anxiety. If I was eligible, I would probably separate due to family concerns and not because of any lack of love for the AF. Currently I am in the worst of all situations. Namely, ineligible due to service commitments yet fearing an involuntary separation at some point.</p>
<p>Add this to your Survey results. I feel like only I am required to maintian my part of the contract. That the AF can change the rules at any time and however they choose. Feel as if I have been lied to, cheated on, and hood-winked. I would expect this from lesser orgs but not the AF I joined. They broke the trust and I dont think I will ever trust them at any level again</p>
<p>1. I was disappointed in the way some of our leadership handled the force shaping process. I didn't see the leadership taking care of the people, keeping them informed, giving them guidance or counseling, being a good wingman, etc. 2. I was also disappointed in the reason for the force shaping...to recapitalize the fleet. Trading people for money sends a bad signal, especially when you are trying to convince the force that people are our most important asset. 3. A little trimming of the ranks is not bad, but I think the AF needs to find a solution to the retention problem at large. Whether FS, RIF, or 'up and out', we are sending a message to our people, and getting rid of some talented folks who may not want to get promoted, but still have a lot to offer. We need to balance keeping the good folks with a need to get rid of non-performers.</p>

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## **Vita**

Captain Ward Willis graduated from Little Cypress Mauriceville High School in Orange, Texas, in May of 1992. He entered undergraduate studies at LAMAR University, Beaumont, Texas, graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Science and earning his license in sports medicine in May of 1997.

Captain Willis worked for Killeen Independent School District as an Athletic Trainer from August of 1997 until joining the Air Force in November of 2001. Upon graduation from Officer Training School in March 2002, Captain Willis was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant. Since commissioning, Captain Willis has served in the military as an Air Force communications officer for six years. Upon graduation, Captain Willis will be assigned to Air Force Reserve Command Headquarters, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia.



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